

THE
EUGENE
FIELD
BOOK

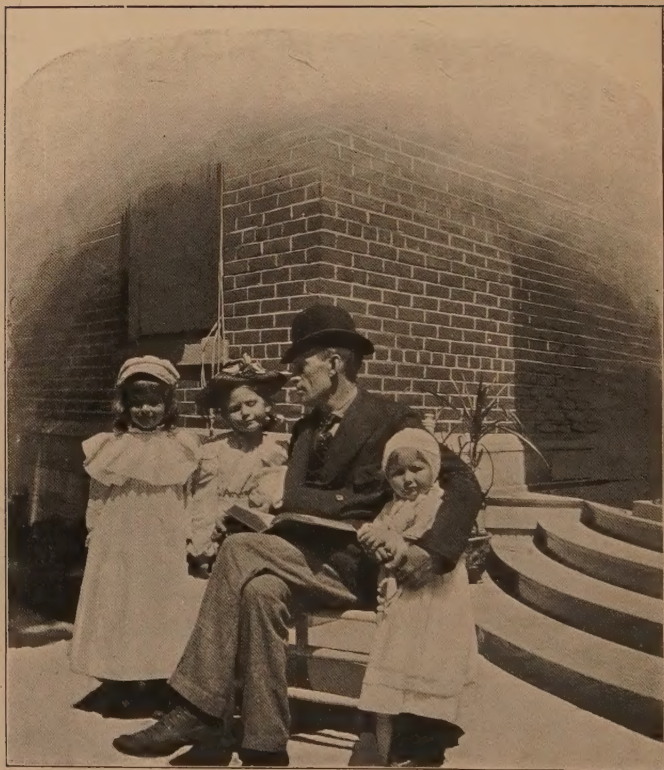
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THE EUGENE FIELD BOOK





EUGENE FIELD AND HIS LITTLE FRIENDS

THE EUGENE FIELD BOOK

VERSES, STORIES, AND LETTERS
FOR SCHOOL READING

EDITED BY

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AND

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE W. CABLE

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

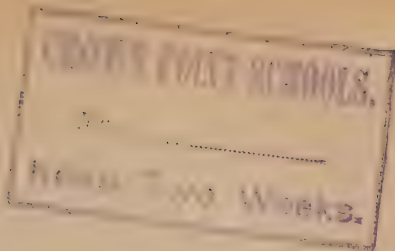
1899



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TO
THE WIFE AND CHILDREN
OF
EUGENE FIELD





PREFACE

The Eugene Field Book is an outgrowth of a constant demand for Field's poems in daily school-reading, in weekly exercises, in school entertainments, in kindergartens, and in home study.

The selections have been made upon a basis furnished by the children themselves, after repeated experiments, and have been graded and arranged, after repeated tests, in the order of their simplicity. "Little Boy Blue," "The Duel," and "The Sugar-Plum Tree" are invariably chosen by the youngest children, those of eight or nine years or younger; while "The Stoddards," "Our Two Opinions," "Long Ago," and other selections used farther on in the book, are the choice of older pupils.

Four years ago, while visiting the schools of Liverpool, England, in search of the best and newest ideals in teaching, I was first impressed with the great value of Eugene Field as a poet for the schoolroom.

The Chairman of the Board of Education sent a clerk to show me several of the schools most approved for advanced thought and method. Among them was a large school over which presided a principal (Mr. Nixon) who made a specialty of poetry. He took me into a room where there were about a hundred boys, of an average age of ten or eleven years, reciting "The Rock-A-By Lady" with great spirit. The principal joined in the recitation, as he did also in other rooms where the boys recited from Whittier and Longfellow. These little boys read remarkably well, because they learned so much poetry, and they were fine and nice in their behavior, as children are when they dwell upon gentle themes.

Afterward at a brilliant poetry contest at Carnegie Hall, New York, "Seein' Things at Night" (recited by a twelve-year-old boy), receiving a tremendous encore from a crowded house of scholarly people, I was reassured that a new poet had come to share the laurels so generously bestowed by the American public on Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes.

But it is in my own schoolroom and

among my own pupils that the most genuine realization of Eugene Field's genius has come to me. The child, when left to his own inner leadings, his opinions not constrained, speaks out with great courage ; his criticism has the delicacy of the downy bloom of his own cheek. His velvet voice lingers over the lines most exquisite in finish, like his own feelings, and " from these presents " I know that the child, the perfection of creation, has found his own poet, his own interpreter. A roguish brownie of eight years, as full of play as the day is long, finds leisure in some way, to learn " Wynken, Blynken, and Nod " and begs to recite it, and all the other brownies listen with eyes sparkling. A more serious child presents " The Wanderer " or " Christmas Treasures " or " Pittypat and Tippy-Toes " and every rosy face becomes thoughtful. What a world of little people was left unrepresented in the realms of poetry until Eugene Field came !

The letters of Eugene Field to his children are, in a way, equally valuable with his poetry. They are genuine, honest, and human, and serve better in class work than the letter which is made up for "an ex-

ample." Letter-writing is now an essential factor in every course of study. There are a few instances of genuine letters in some of our readers : Washington's letters to his mother, Franklin's quaint briefs, or an occasional letter from Lord Chesterfield. These stately old epistles are regarded as historic curiosities, but they are not as close to the child as the warmer modern letters of our poet. The letters used in this book have been presented to four different grades of pupils ranging in age from eight to fourteen years and are alike interesting to all, not one child failing to respond to the fatherly voice in them, nor failing to appreciate the sanctity of the situations, while recognizing the grace of the literary form.

The simple prose selection, " Little Mistress Merciless," for the younger children, was first published in the Chicago *Daily News*. " Margaret : A Pearl," is a story which conveys a most serious lesson and has been chosen because it instantly wins for itself the spontaneous commendation of the pupils.

MARY E. BURT.

NEW YORK, *April 8*, 1898.

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INTRODUCTION

A majority of the writers, past or present, who win high places in our regard do so by planned invasion and over-mastery of us from our intellectual side ; or, if through the provinces of our emotions, yet, as to themselves, in a manner largely impersonal, as if their books and pages were their guides and armies sent in their stead ; a dearer few are they who win such place by the unasserted power of an easy, abundant and personal entrance into our affections.

What such men write is so manifestly a revelation and surrender of themselves to us that our tenderest impulses are ever eager to reach beyond their pages for yet richer contact with their personalities, and the most trivial incident or speech brought forth from anyone's recollections of them borrows the charm of their genius.

Whenever, in America, at least, the table-talk, whether in books or around the social

board, turns upon writings or writers and takes the form of quotation or anecdote, one of the names that will be most frequently and tenderly mentioned will be that of Eugene Field. He stands pointedly contrasted with some of his kind by the shortness of his true literary career. Journalism consumed the greater share of his daily attention and strength, and the fact that we have what we have of that finer work which so tardily, though at length so swiftly, proclaimed his genius, and which at one time his publishers could hardly issue fast enough to keep it in print, is most likely due not to a grim economy of such time and strength as journalism spared to him, but to that gay, irresponsible boyishness whose eccentricities provoked almost daily the fond laughter of a host of loving friends.

No one need be misled in inferring the personality of Eugene Field from his writings. Their roystering gaiety, their honest bonhomie, their frequently exquisite grace, their childlikeness and child-love, their revelation of the beautiful beneath the mask of the grotesque, their overflowing catholicity of sympathy and fellowship, were

his own in heart and life. Even in his own visible person he joined refinements and uncouthnesses of line. He once gave, without hesitation, to a newly made acquaintance a photograph of himself, taken nearly full-length in an overcoat that was almost a mackintosh, writing under it, in his exquisite penmanship, "Eugene Field : An unnamed Horror." Only to total strangers was his name Field, and no man worthy to be anyone's friend could call him by any name but his first after three days' acquaintance-ship. In all the word's best meaning he was a boy, and all men and women were his boy and girl friends and playmates. There was a magic in his companionship that brought the boy and girl out of hiding in all who enjoyed it.

We owe a tender gratitude to men and women who make life lighter in its burdens and richer in its joys by visibly studying the pleasure of those about them. But Eugene Field's study of the pleasure of others was something he never allowed to show on the surface of his words or acts. Whenever he made one of a group in conversation he seemed to do just so much of the talking as suited his caprice and no

more ; yet by and by you would notice that he never monopolized the conversation and that it was mainly through his impulse that it kept passing around the circle. He did not send out his heart to persons or things ; he took them into it as wholly without effort or show of goodness as the clover takes the bee.

The perfect ease with which he could be sweet where most men would be sour was one of the drolleries of his nature. A young man speaking for a local management which had engaged him to give a public reading jointly with another author, and which, after having already secured a special concession in price, had managed things feebly, took him aside at the last moment and asked a further abatement. "My dear fellow," was Mr. Field's affectionate reply, "I'm neither the man, nor the sort of man for you to come to. Go to my partner ; his heart is marble."

Surely no one could invent an attitude of irresponsibility, at the same moment and to everyone more perfectly amiable and unpromising.

One of the secrets of Field's personal charm was that he never lived by com-

parison with others. He took no more delight in singularity, and harbored no more fear of it, than any nine-year-old boy. And so, though he had abundant ambition, he never let ambition rule him. He probably never intentionally "lived at the top of his voice" one whole day of his life. This made room for a show of waywardness, notwithstanding which he was neither obstinate nor weak. He put aside powerful temptation with a firmness of purpose hidden from view by his happy equanimity as the bones were hidden in his hand.

Yet he was a stranger to scrupulosity. It was not in character for him to do or omit anything without some better reason than a scruple. And this was due, not to wilfulness, but to a genuine magnanimity which extended even to the caprices of fortune.

He stood, one afternoon, when the experiences of the platform were still new to him, before as brilliant an audience of three thousand as one of our greatest cities' intellectual life could supply, and in the evening of the same day, when he had fully expected a similar gathering, in a neighboring city, confronted, instead, a total assemblage

of thirteen persons. Yet neither then nor at any time afterward did he give the slightest or most private sign of self-complacency for the first experience, or of chagrin for the second.

Children went to his lap as promptly as to a garden swing, and even among their seniors his preference for them was as undisguised as it was genuine. On going into a strange household it was as natural for him to seek out the children as for a cat to inspect the garret—a very ill-chosen and unworthy simile, which Field would not have resented, for he cared nothing for a personal dignity that had to be cared for by its owner; an ill-chosen and unworthy simile, nevertheless, for the feline nature is not above betraying anxiety. Field's nature was.

In the dining-room of a hotel in one of our inland cities, a guest, who happened to be sitting alone, called the colored head-waiter and asked him who the man was whom he pointed out sitting at a neighboring table with a single companion.

“Is n't that Eugene Field?”

“I dunno seh; I reckon it is; who is Mist' Eugene Fiel'?”

"Why, the famous author !"

"O ! yas, seh ; to be sho ! I—eh—yas, seh, I reckon dat *is* Mr. Fiel' ; yas, seh ; I been a' thinkin' all de time he look mo' o' less like a book-agent."

Within an hour the story came to Field's ears. Whereupon he suggested to his companion to keep up the illusion ; and at every turn about the house they let themselves be overheard talking in quiet seriousness about subscriptions, deliveries, and canvassing prospects. And not without success.

The work of the platform finished, there was need of haste to catch the train for Chicago. Field gave his own and his friend's travelling-bags to the porter and hurried away, without the checks, bidding him give the checks to his friend, which a moment later the porter was enabled to do, saying, "Dis-yeh one, dat's yoze, yas, seh ; dat's faw de gripsack."

"And this other is Mr. Field's, is it ?"

"Yas, seh, dat's faw de sample-case."

Field was perfectly happy when he heard this sequel, and went away glad to leave a universal laugh behind him at whatever expense to himself in distortion of his rightful celebrity.

Of course, this mere memorandum is no portrait. It is but the vehicle for a few impressions of one who knew Eugene Field not nearly so long or so well as did many others, but amply long and well enough to testify to the sweetness and strength of a character and life comparatively unfettered by that mechanical order which to persons of less native sweetness or strength—to the most of us, indeed—is as indispensable as rails and couplings to a moving train. It took but a short while and no special generosity of mind for anyone to see that traits which would have set radically wrong the clock-work lives of commoner men were but the shadows and shadow-play of the gifts that made him a boon to the world ; and that it was to their own and the world's advantage that his most familiar friends took him as fortune gave him and wore him close to their hearts as something that did infinitely better things than keep time.

GEORGE W. CABLE.

TARRYAWHILE, NORTHAMPTON, MASS., Jan'y, '98.



PART I
POEMS

LITTLE BOY BLUE

THE little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and stanch he stands ;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

“ Now, don't you go till I come,” he said,
“ And don't you make any noise !”
So toddling off to his trundle-bed
He dreamt of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue,—
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face.

And they wonder, as waiting these long years
through,
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
Since he kissed them and put them there.

THE ROCK-A-BY LADY

THE Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby street
Comes stealing; comes creeping;
The poppies they hang from her head to her feet,
And each hath a dream that is tiny and fleet—
She bringeth her poppies to you, my sweet,
When she findeth you sleeping!

There is one little dream of a beautiful drum—
“Rub-a-dub!” it goeth;
There is one little dream of a big sugar-plum,
And lo! thick and fast the other dreams come
Of popguns that bang, and tin tops that hum,
And a trumpet that bloweth!

And dollies peep out of those wee little dreams
With laughter and singing;
And boats go a-floating on silvery streams,
And the stars peek-a-boo with their own misty
gleams,

And up, up, and up, where the Mother Moon
beams,
The fairies go winging !

Would you dream all these dreams that are tiny
and fleet ?

They 'll come to you sleeping ;
So shut the two eyes that are weary, my sweet,
For the Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby street,
With poppies that hang from her head to her
feet,
Comes stealing ; comes creeping.

THE DUEL

THE gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat ;
'T was half-past twelve, and (what do you think !)
Nor one nor t' other had slept a wink !

The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
*(I was n't there ; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate !)*

The gingham dog went " bow-wow-wow ! "
And the calico cat replied " mee-ow ! "

The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney
place

Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
*(Now mind : I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true !)*

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do!"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfulest way you ever saw—
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
*(Don't fancy I exaggerate—
I got my news from the Chinese plate !)*

Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
*(The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know.)*

CHILD AND MOTHER

O MOTHER-MY-LOVE, if you'll give me your
hand,

And go where I ask you to wander,
I will lead you away to a beautiful land,—
The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.
We'll walk in a sweet posie-garden out there,
Where moonlight and starlight are streaming,
And the flowers and the birds are filling the air
With the fragrance and music of dreaming.

There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress,
No questions or cares to perplex you,
There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress,
Nor patching of stockings to vex you ;
For I'll rock you away on a silver-dew stream
And sing you asleep when you're weary,
And no one shall know of our beautiful dream
But you and your own little dearie.

And when I am tired I'll nestle my head
In the bosom that's soothed me so often,
And the wide-awake stars, shall sing in my stead,
A song which our dreaming shall soften.

So, Mother-my-Love, let me take your dear hand,
And away through the starlight we 'll wander,—
Away through the mist to the beautiful land,—
The Dreamland that 's waiting out yonder.

AT THE DOOR

I THOUGHT myself indeed secure,
So fast the door, so firm the lock ;
But, lo ! he toddling comes to lure
My parent ear with timorous knock.

My heart were stone could it withstand
The sweetness of my baby's plea,—
That timorous baby knocking and
“ Please let me in,—it 's only me.”

I threw aside the unfinished book,
Regardless of its tempting charms,
And opening wide the door, I took
My laughing darling in my arms.

Who knows but in Eternity,
I, like a truant child, shall wait
The glories of a life to be,
Beyond the Heavenly Father's gate ?

And will that Heavenly Father heed
The truant's supplicating cry,
As at the outer door I plead,
" 'T is I, O Father! only I?"

THE SHUT-EYE TRAIN

COME, my little one, with me!
There are wondrous sights to see
As the evening shadows fall;
In your pretty cap and gown,
Don't detain
The Shut-Eye train—
"Ting-a-ling!" the bell it goeth,
"Toot-toot!" the whistle bloweth,
And we hear the warning call:
"All aboard for Shut-Eye Town!"
Over hill and over plain
Soon will speed the Shut-Eye train!
Through the blue where bloom the stars
And the Mother Moon looks down
We'll away
To land of Fay—
And in those mysterious places
We shall see beloved faces
And beloved voices hear
In the grace of Shut-Eye Town.

Heavy are your eyes, my sweet,
Weary are your little feet—

Nestle closer up to me

In your pretty cap and gown ;

Don't detain

The Shut-Eye train !

"Ting-a-ling !" the bell it goeth,

"Toot-toot !" the whistle bloweth.

Oh, the sights that we shall see !

All aboard for Shut-Eye Town !

Shut-Eye Town is passing fair—

Golden dreams await us there ;

We shall dream those dreams, my dear,

Till the Mother Moon goes down—

See unfold

Delights untold !

Oh, the sights that we shall see there !

Come, my little one, with me there—

'T is a goodly train of cars—

All aboard for Shut-Eye Town !

Swifter than a wild bird's flight,

Through the realms of fleecy light

We shall speed and speed away !

Let the Night in envy frown—

What care we

How wroth she be !

To the Balow-land above us,
 To the Balow-folk who love us,
 Let us hasten while we may—
All aboard for Shut-Eye Town!

"BOOH!"

ON afternoons, when baby boy has had a splendid nap,
 And sits, like any monarch on his throne, in nurse's lap,
 In some such wise my handkerchief I hold before my face,
 And cautiously and quietly I move about the place;
 Then, with a cry, I suddenly expose my face to view,
 And you should hear him laugh and crow when I say "Booh!"

Sometimes the rascal tries to make believe that he is scared,
 And really, when I first began, he stared, and stared, and stared;
 And then his under lip came out and farther out it came,
 Till mamma and the nurse agreed it was a "cruel shame"—

But now what does that same wee, toddling,
lispng baby do
But laugh and kick his little heels when I say
"Booh!"

He laughs and kicks his little heels in rapturous
glee, and then
In shrill, despotic treble bids me "do it all aden!"
And I—of course I do it; for, as his progenitor,
It is such pretty, pleasant play as this that I am
for!
And it is, oh, such fun! and I am sure that we
shall rue
The time when we are both too old to play the
game of "Booh!"

LITTLE HOMER'S SLATE

AFTER dear old grandma died,
Hunting through an oaken chest
In the attic, we espied
What repaid our childish quest:
'T was a homely little slate,
Seemingly of ancient date.

On its quaint and battered face
Was the picture of a cart,

Drawn with all that awkward grace
Which betokens childish art ;
But what meant this legend, pray :
“Homer drew this yesterday ?”

Mother recollected then
What the years were fain to hide—
She was but a baby when
Little Homer lived and died ;
Forty years, so mother said,
Little Homer had been dead.

This one secret through those years
Grandma kept from all apart,
Hallowed by her lonely tears
And the breaking of her heart ;
While each year that sped away
Seemed to her but yesterday.

So the homely little slate
Grandma's baby's fingers pressed,
To a memory consecrate,
Lieth in the oaken chest,
Where, unwilling we should know,
Grandma put it, years ago.

THE SUGAR-PLUM TREE

HAVE you ever heard of the Sugar-Plum Tree?

'T is a marvel of great renown !

It blooms on the shore of the Lollipop sea

In the garden of Shut-Eye Town ;

The fruit that it bears is so wondrously sweet

(As those who have tasted it say)

That good little children have only to eat

Of that fruit to be happy next day.

When you 've got to the tree, you would have a
hard time

To capture the fruit which I sing ;

The tree is so tall that no person could climb

To the boughs where the sugar-plums swing !

But up in that tree sits a chocolate cat,

And a gingerbread dog prowls below—

And this is the way you contrive to get at

Those sugar-plums tempting you so :

You say but the word to that gingerbread dog

And he barks with such terrible zest

That the chocolate cat is at once all agog,

As her swelling proportions attest.



EUGENE FIELD'S DOLLS

And the chocolate cat goes cavorting around
From this leafy limb unto that,
And the sugar-plums tumble, of course, to the
ground—

Hurrah for that chocolate cat!

There are marshmallows, gumdrops, and pepper-
mint canes,

With stripings of scarlet or gold,
And you carry away of the treasure that rains
As much as your apron can hold!
So come, little child, cuddle closer to me
In your dainty white nightcap and gown,
And I'll rock you away to that Sugar-Plum Tree
In the garden of Shut-Eye Town.

JAPANESE LULLABY.

SLEEP, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;
Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging—
Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star,—
Silvery star with a tinkling song;
To the soft dew falling I hear it calling—
Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes,—
Little gold moonbeam with misty wings ;
All silently creeping, it asks, " Is he sleeping—
Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings ? "

Up from the sea there floats the sob
Of the waves that are breaking upon the shore,
As though they were groaning in anguish, and
moaning—

Bemoaning the ship that shall come no more.

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
Little blue pigeon, with mournful eyes :
Am I not singing?—see, I am swinging—
Swinging the nest where my darling lies.





LITTLE MISTRESS MERCILESS



LITTLE MISTRESS MERCELESS.

WHEN of an evening all the joy of day was done, would our little Mistress Merciless fall aweary; and then her eyelids would grow exceeding heavy, and her little tired hands were fain to fold. At such a time it was my wont to beguile her weariness with little tales of faery, or with the gentle play that sleepy children like. Much was her fancy taken with what I told her of the train that every night whirleth away to Shut-Eye Town, bearing unto that beauteous country sleepy little girls and boys. Nor would she be content until I told her thereof—yes, every night whilst I robed her in her cap and gown would she demand of me that tale of Shut-Eye Town and the wonderful train that was to bear her thither. Then would I say in this wise:

“At Bedtime-ville there is a train of cars that waiteth for you, my sweet, for you and for other little ones that would go to quiet, slumbrous Shut-Eye Town.

“But make no haste; there is room for all. Each hath a tiny car that is snug and warm, and when the train starteth each car swingeth soothingly this way and that way, this way and that way, through all the journey of the night.

“Your little gown is white and soft ; your little cap will hold those pretty curls so fast that they cannot get away. Here is a curl that peepeth out to see what is going to happen. Hush, little curl ! make no noise ; we will let you peep out at the wonderful sights, but you must not tell the others about it ; let them sleep, snuggled close together.

“The locomotive is ready to start. Can you not hear it ?

“‘Shug-chug ! Shug-chug ! Shug-chug !’ That is what the locomotive is saying, all to itself. It knoweth how pleasant a journey it is about to make.

“‘Shug-chug ! Shug-chug ! Shug-chug !’

“Oh, many a time hath it proudly swept over prairie and hill, over river and plain, through sleeping gardens and drowsy cities, swiftly and quietly, bearing the little ones to the far, pleasant valley where lieth Shut-Eye Town.

“‘Shug-chug ! Shug-chug ! Shug-chug !’

“So sayeth the locomotive to itself at the station in Bedtime-ville, for it knoweth how fair and far a journey is before it.

“Then a bell soundeth. Surely my little one heareth the bell !

“‘Ting-long ! Ting-a-long ! Ting-long !’

“How sweetly ringeth and calleth that bell !

“‘To sleep—to dreams, O little lambs !’ it seemeth to call. ‘Nestle down close, fold your hands, and shut your dear eyes ! We are off and

away to Shut-Eye Town. Ting-long ! Ting-long ! Ting-long ! To sleep—to dreams, O little cosset lambs !’

“ And now the conductor calleth out in turn. ‘ All aboard ! ’ he calleth, ‘ All aboard for Shut-Eye Town ! ’ he calleth in a kindly tone.

“ But, hark ye, dear-my soul, make thou no haste ; there is room for all. Here is a cozy little car for you. How likè your cradle it is, for it is snug and warm, and it rocketh this way and that way, this way and that way, all night long, and its pillows caress you tenderly. So step into the pretty nest and in it speed to Shut-Eye Town.

“ ‘ Toot ! Toot ! ’

“ That is the whistle. It soundeth twice, but it must sound again before the train can start. Now you have nestled down and your dear hands are folded ; let your two eyes be folded, too, my sweet, for in a moment you shall be rocked away, and away, away into the golden mists of Balow.

“ ‘ Ting-long ! Ting-a-long ! Ting-long ! ’

“ ‘ All aboard ! ’

“ ‘ Toot ! Toot ! Toot ! ’

“ And so my little golden apple is off and away for Shut-Eye Town !

“ Slowly moveth the train, yet faster by degrees. Your hands are folded, my beloved, and your dear eyes they are closed ; and yet you see the beauteous sights that skirt the journey through the mists of Balow. And it is rockaway,

rockaway, rockaway, that your speeding cradle goes—rockaway, rockaway, rockaway, through the golden glories that lie in the path that leadeth to Shut-Eye Town.

“‘Toot! Toot!’

“So crieth the whistle, and it is down-brakes, for here we are at Ginkville, and every little one knoweth that pleasant waking place, where mother with her gentle hands holdeth the gracious cup to her sleepy darling’s lips.

“‘Ting-long! Ting-a-long! Ting-long!’ and off is the train again. And swifter and swifter it speedeth—oh, I am sure no other train speedeth so swiftly! The sights my dear one sees! I cannot tell of them—one must see those beauteous sights to know how wonderful they are!

“‘Shug-chug! Shug-chug! Shug-chug!’

“On and on and on the locomotive proudly whirleth the train.

“‘Ting-long! Ting-a-long! Ting-long!’

“The bell calleth anon, but fainter and evermore fainter; and fainter and fainter groweth that other calling—‘Toot! Toot! Toot!’—till finally I know that in that Shut-Eye Town afar my dear one dreameth the dreams of Balow.”

This was the bedtime tale which I was wont to tell our little Mistress Merciless, and at its end I looked upon her face to see it calm and beautiful in sleep.

Then I was wont to kneel beside her little bed and fold my two hands—thus—and let my heart

call to the host invisible : " O guardian angels of this little child, hold her in thy keeping from all the perils of darkness and the night ! O sovereign Shepherd, cherish Thy little lamb and mine, and, Holy Mother, fold her to thy bosom and thy love. But give her back to me—when morning cometh, restore ye unto me my little one ! "

But once she came not back. She had spoken much of Master Sweetheart and of that land of Ever-Plaisance whither he had gone. And she was not afeared to make the journey alone ; so once upon a time when our little Mistress Merciless bade us good-bye and went away forever, we knew that it were better so, for she was lonely here, and without her that far distant country whither she journeyed were not content. Though our hearts were like to break for love of her, we knew that it were better so.

The tale is told, for it were not seemly to speak all the things that are in one's heart when one hath much to say of a much beloved child whose life here hath been shortened so that, in God's wisdom and kindness, her life shall be longer in that garden that bloometh far away.

About me are scattered the toys she loved, and the doll Beautiful hath come down all battered and grim—yet, oh ! so very precious to me, from those distant years ; yonder fareth the Queen of Sheba in her service as handmaiden unto me and mine—gaunt and doleful-eyed, yet stanch and sturdy as of old. The garden lieth under the

Christmas snow--the garden where ghosts of trees wave their arms and moan over the graves of flowers; the once gracious arbor is crippled now with the infirmities of age, the Siege of Restfulness fast sinketh into decay, and long, oh! long ago did that bird Joyous carol forth his last sweet song in the garden that was once so passing fair.

And amid it all--this heart-ache and the loneliness which the years have brought, cometh my Christmas gift to-day! The solace of a vision of that country whither she--our little Mistress Merciless--hath gone; a glimpse of that far-off land of Ever-Plaisance.



PART II
POEMS





LITTLE MISS BRAG

LITTLE Miss Brag has much to say
To the rich little lady from over the way
And the rich little lady puts out a lip
As she looks at her own white, dainty slip,
And wishes that *she* could wear a gown
As pretty as gingham of faded brown!
For little Miss Brag she lays much stress
On the privileges of a gingham dress—

“Aha,
Oho!”

The rich little lady from over the way
Has beautiful dolls in vast array;
Yet she envies the raggedy home-made doll
She hears our little Miss Brag extol.
For the raggedy doll can fear no hurt
From wet, or heat, or tumble, or dirt!
Her nose is inked, and her mouth is, too,
And one eye's black and the other's blue—

“Aha,
Oho!”

The rich little lady goes out to ride
With footmen standing up outside,
Yet wishes that, sometimes, after dark
Her father would trundle *her* in the park ;—
That, sometimes, *her* mother would sing the things
Little Miss Brag says *her* mother sings
When through the attic window streams
The moonlight full of golden dreams—

“ Aha,
Oho ! ”

Yes, little Miss Brag has much to say
To the rich little lady from over the way ;
And yet who knows but from her heart
Often the bitter sighs upstart—
Uprise to lose their burn and sting
In the grace of the tongue that loves to sing
Praise of the treasures all its own !
So I 've come to love that treble tone—

“ Aha,
Oho ! ”

CHRISTMAS TREASURES

I COUNT my treasures o'er with care,—
The little toy my darling knew,
A little sock of faded hue,
A little lock of golden hair.

Long years ago this holy time,
My little one—my all to me—
Sat robed in white upon my knee
And heard the merry Christmas chime.

“ Tell me, my little golden-head,
If Santa Claus should come to-night,
What shall he bring my baby bright,—
What treasure for my boy ? ” I said.

And then he named this little toy,
While in his round and mournful eyes
There came a look of sweet surprise,
That spake his quiet, trustful joy.

And as he lisped his evening prayer.
He asked the boon with childish grace,
Then, toddling to the chimney-place,
He hung this little stocking there.

That night, while lengthening shadows crept,
I saw the white-winged angels come
With singing to our lowly home
And kiss my darling as he slept.

They must have heard his little prayer,
For in the morn, with rapturous face,
He toddled to the chimney-place,
And found this little treasure there.

They came again one Christmas-tide,—
That angel host, so fair and white!
And singing all that glorious night,
They lured my darling from my side.

A little sock, a little toy,
A little lock of golden hair,
The Christmas music on the air,
A watching for my baby boy!

But if again that angel train
And golden-head come back for me,
To bear me to Eternity,
My watching will not be in vain.

SO, SO, ROCK-A-BY SO !

So, so, rock-a-by so !

Off to the garden where dreamikins grow ;

And here is a kiss on your winkyblink eyes,

And here is a kiss on your dimpledown cheek,

And here is a kiss for the treasure that lies

In the beautiful garden way up in the skies

Which you seek.

Now mind these three kisses wherever you go—

So, so, rock-a-by so !

There 's one little fumfay who lives there, I know,

For he dances all night where the dreamikins
grow ;

I send him this kiss on your droopydrop eyes,

I send him this kiss on your rosyred cheek.

And here is a kiss for the dream that shall rise

When the fumfay shall dance in those far-away
skies

Which you seek.

Be sure that you pay those three kisses you owe—

So, so, rock-a-by so !

And, by-low, as you rock-a-by go,
Don't forget mother who loveth you so!
And here is her kiss on your weepydeep eyes,
 And here is her kiss on your peachypink cheek,
And here is her kiss for the dreamland that lies
Like a babe on the breast of those far-away skies
 Which you seek—
The blinkywink garden where dreamikins grow—
So, so, rock-a-by so!

TO A USURPER

AHA! a traitor in the camp,
 A rebel strangely bold,—
A lisping, laughing, toddling scamp,
 Not more than four years old!

To think that I, who 've ruled alone
 So proudly in the past,
Should be ejected from my throne
 By my own son at last!

He trots his treason to and fro,
 As only babies can,
And says he 'll be his mamma's beau
 When he 's a "gweat, big man"!

You stingy boy ! you 've always had
A share in mamma's heart ;
Would you begrudge your poor old dad
The tiniest little part ?

That mamma, I regret to see,
Inclines to take your part,—
As if a dual monarchy
Should rule her gentle heart !

But when the years of youth have sped,
The bearded man, I trow,
Will quite forget he ever said
He 'd be his mamma's beau.

Renounce your treason, little son,
Leave mamma's heart to me ;
For there will come another one
To claim your loyalty.

And when that other comes to you,
God grant her love may shine
Through all your life, as fair and true
As mamma's does through mine !

PITTYPAT AND TIPPYTOE

ALL day long they come and go—
Pittypat and Tippytoe ;
Footprints up and down the hall,
Playthings scattered on the floor,
Finger-marks along the wall,
Tell-tale smudges on the door,—
By these presents you shall know
Pittypat and Tippytoe.

How they riot at their play !
And a dozen times a day
In they troop, demanding bread—
Only buttered bread will do,
And that butter must be spread
Inches thick with sugar too !
And I never can say “ No,
Pittypat and Tippytoe ! ”

Sometimes there are griefs to soothe,
Sometimes ruffled brows to smooth ;
For (I much regret to say)
Tippytoe and Pittypat
Sometimes interrupt their play
With an internecine spat ;

Fie, for shame ! to quarrel so—
Pittypat and Tippytoe !

Oh the thousand worrying things
Every day recurrent brings !

Hands to scrub and hair to brush,
Search for playthings gone amiss,
Many a wee complaint to hush,
Many a little bump to kiss ;
Life seems one vain, fleeting show
To Pittypat and Tippytoe !

And when day is at an end,
There are little duds to mend :

Little frocks are strangely torn,
Little shoes great holes reveal,
Little hose, but one day worn,
Rudely yawn at toe and heel !
Who but *you* could work such woe,
Pittypat and Tippytoe ?

But when comes this thought to me :

“ Some there are that childless be,”
Stealing to their little beds,
With a love I cannot speak,
Tenderly I stroke their heads—
Fondly kiss each velvet cheek.

God help those who do not know
A Pittypat or Tippytoe!

On the floor and down the hall,
Rudely smutched upon the wall,
There are proofs in every kind
Of the havoc they have wrought,
And upon my heart you'd find
Just such trade-marks, if you sought ;
Oh, how glad I am 't is so,
Pittypat and Tippytoe!

HUSHABY, SWEET MY OWN

FAIR is the castle up on the hill—
Hushaby, sweet my own !
The night is fair, and the waves are still,
And the wind is singing to you and to me
In this lowly home beside the sea—
Hushaby, sweet my own !

On yonder hill is store of wealth—
Hushaby, sweet my own !
And revellers drink to a little one's health ;
But you and I bide night and day
For the other love that has sailed away—
Hushaby, sweet my own !

See not, dear eyes, the forms that creep
 Ghostlike, O my own !

Out of the mists of the murmuring deep ;
Oh, see them not and make no cry
Till the angels of death have passed us by—
 Hushaby, sweet my own !

Ah, little they reckon of you and me—
 Hushaby, sweet my own !
In our lonely home beside the sea ;
They seek the castle up on the hill,
And there they will do their ghostly will—
 Hushaby, O my own !

Here by the sea a mother croons
 “ Hushaby, sweet my own ! ”
In yonder castle a mother swoons
While the angels go down to the misty deep,
Bearing a little one fast asleep—
 Hushaby, sweet my own !

INTRY-MINTRY

WILLIE and Bess, Georgie and May—
Once, as these children were hard at play,
An old man, hoary and tottering, came
And watched them playing their pretty game.

He seemed to wonder, while standing there,

What the meaning thereof could be—

Aha, but the old man yearned to share

Of the little children's innocent glee

As they circled around with laugh and shout

And told their rime at counting out :

“ Intry-mintry, cutrey-corn,

Apple-seed and apple-thorn ;

Wire, brier, limber, lock,

Twelve geese in a flock ;

Some flew east, some flew west,

Some flew over the cuckoo's nest ! ”

Willie and Bess, Georgie and May—

Ah, the mirth of that summer-day !

'T was Father Time who had come to share

The innocent joy of those children there ;

He learned betimes the game they played

And into their sport with them went he—

How *could* the children have been afraid,
Since little they recked whom he might be?
They laughed to hear old Father Time
Mumbling that curious nonsense rime
Of "Intry-mintry, cutrey-corn,
Apple-seed and apple-thorn;
Wire, brier, limber, lock,
Twelve geese in a flock;
Some flew east, some flew west,
Some flew over the cuckoo's nest!"

Willie and Bess, Georgie and May,
And joy of summer—where are they?
The grim old man still standeth near
Crooning the song of a far-off year;
And into the winter I come alone,
Cheered by that mournful requiem,
Soothed by the dolorous monotone
That shall count me off as it counted them—
The solemn voice of old Father Time
Chanting the homely nursery rime
He learned of the children a summer morn
When, with "apple-seed and apple-thorn,"
Life was full of the dulcet cheer
That bringeth the grace of heaven anear—
The sound of the little ones hard at play—
Willie and Bess, Georgie and May.

GOOD-CHILDREN STREET

THERE'S a dear little home in Good-Children
street—

My heart turneth fondly to-day
Where tinkle of tongues and patter of feet
Make sweetest of music at play ;
Where the sunshine of love illumines each face
And warms every heart in that old-fashioned
place.

For dear little children go romping about
With dollies and tin tops and drums,
And, my ! how they frolic and scamper and shout
Till bedtime too speedily comes !
Oh, days they are golden and days they are fleet
With little folk living in Good-Children street.

See, here comes an army with guns painted red,
And swords, caps, and plumes of all sorts ;
The captain rides gaily and proudly ahead
On a stick-horse that prances and snorts !
Oh, legions of soldiers you're certain to meet—
Nice make-believe soldiers—in Good-Children
street.

And yonder Odette wheels her dolly about—
 Poor dolly! I'm sure she is ill,
For one of her blue china eyes has dropped out
 And her voice is asthmatic'ly shrill.
Then, too, I observe she is minus her feet,
Which causes much sorrow in Good-Children
 street.

'T is so the dear children go romping about
 With dollies and banners and drums,
And I venture to say they are sadly put out
 When an end to their jubilee comes :
Oh, days they are golden and days they are fleet
With little folk living in Good-Children street !

But when falleth night over river and town,
 Those little folk vanish from sight,
And an angel all white from the sky cometh
 down

And guardeth the babes through the night,
And singeth her lullabies tender and sweet
To the dear little people in Good-Children street.

Though elsewhere the world be o'erburdened
 with care,

 Though poverty fall to my lot,
Though toil and vexation be always my share,
 What care I—they trouble me not !

*This thought maketh life ever joyous and sweet :
There's a dear little home in Good-Children
street.*

KRINKEN

KRINKEN was a little child,—
It was summer when he smiled.
Oft the hoary sea and grim
Stretched its white arms out to him,
Calling, "Sun-child, come to me ;
Let me warm my heart with thee !"
But the child heard not the sea,
Calling, yearning evermore
For the summer on the shore.

Krinken on the beach one day
Saw a maiden Nis at play ;
On the pebbly beach she played
In the summer Krinken made.
Fair, and very fair, was she,
Just a little child was he.

"Krinken," said the maiden Nis,
"Let me have a little kiss,—
Just a kiss, and go with me
To the summer lands that be
Down within the silver sea."

Krinken was a little child—
By the maiden Nis beguiled
Hand in hand with her went he,
And 't was summer in the sea.
And the hoary sea and grim
To its bosom folded him—
Clasped and kissed the little form,
And the ocean's heart was warm.

Now the sea calls out no more ;
It is winter on the shore,—
Winter where that little child
Made sweet summer when he smiled ;
Though 't is summer on the sea
Where with maiden Nis went he,—
Summer, summer evermore,—
It is winter on the shore,
Winter, winter evermore.

Of the summer on the deep
Come sweet visions in my sleep ;
His fair face lifts from the sea,
His dear voice calls out to me,—
These my dreams of summer be.

Krinken was a little child,
By the maiden Nis beguiled ;

Oft the hoary sea and grim
Reached its longing arms to him,
Crying, "Sun-child, come to me ;
Let me warm my heart with thee !"
But the sea calls out no more ;
It is winter on the shore,—
Winter, cold and dark and wild ;
Krinken was a little child,—
It was summer when he smiled ;
Down he went into the sea,
And the winter bides with me.
Just a little child was he.

NORSE LULLABY

THE sky is dark and the hills are white
As the storm-king speeds from the north
to-night,
And this is the song the storm-king sings,
As over the world his cloak he flings :
"Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep ;"
He rustles his wings and gruffly sings :
"Sleep, little one, sleep."

On yonder mountain-side a vine
Clings at the foot of a mother pine ;

The tree bends over the trembling thing,
And only the vine can hear her sing:

“ Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep ;
What shall you fear when I am here ?
Sleep, little one, sleep.”

The king may sing in his bitter flight,
The tree may croon to the vine to-night,
But the little snowflake at my breast
Liketh the song *I* sing the best,—

Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep ;
Weary thou art, anext my heart
Sleep, little one, sleep.





PART III

A CHAPTER OF PROFITABLE LETTERS





EUGENE FIELD TO HIS CHILDREN.

AMSTERDAM, *Nov. 8th*, 1889.

MY DEAR BOYS:—

I wonder whether you miss me as much as I miss you. I wish you were here in Amsterdam with us, for it is a beautiful city and it is full of curious sights. Mr. Lynch has bought a pair of wooden shoes to take to little Leigh, and I have bought a funny old watch and a Dutch pipe. To-night we go to London, and in the morning we shall be in the rooms where you were with us ten days ago. I shall expect to hear from each one of you once a week. Meanwhile be courteous and attentive to Prof. and Madame Ruhle; when you play, play hard, when you study, study hard. You must take good care of your health, and be careful not to over-exert yourselves at the gymnasium. Pinny must write to his Aunt Etta, Melvin must write to Mr. Gray, and sometime Dady must write to his Aunt Carrie. On the other side are the office addresses. Good-bye, my dear boys; I shall write again from London in a day or two.

Affectionately,

EUGENE FIELD.

Trotty's address is care of Fraülein Gensen,
Allee Strasse, No. 1.

Nov. 9th, 1889.

LONDON, 20 Alfred Place, Bedford Square, W. C.

MY DEAREST TROTTY :—

Upon our return to London this morning we found your letter awaiting us, and it pained us to hear that you had been homesick. By this time, however, you have probably recovered your cheerfulness. We are greatly pleased to know that you like your associates and your surroundings. I have no doubt that in a little time you will become deeply attached to your new home. All that reconciles me to your separation from me is the conviction that school life is what you should have. You are my only daughter, and I find it hard to have you away from me, yet you will find, as you grow older, that it is the sincerest love that makes the severest sacrifices. I have a letter from Mr. Ballantyne telling me that my books are out at last and that everybody is praising them. Of course, now that there is only a small edition printed (only 250 copies of each) everybody wants a copy; but there is none to be had. The cost of these books was about \$1,100, or, in German money, 4,400 marks. That is a good deal of money, isn't it? As soon as my private copies of the volumes arrive I shall send you two, and you must show them to Fräulein Gensen and to Prof.



EUGENE FIELD IN HIS LIBRARY

Ruhle. I send you by to-day's mail a number of Christmas and New Year's cards, thinking that you might like to send them to little friends in America. Please ask Miss Gensen if my letters to you are addressed correctly. Your mother says that if you need the shoes, Miss Gensen will get them for you ; but she wants you to bear in mind that we are poor, and that it is by rigid economy that we shall be able to give you and the boys the advantages we wish you to have. Mr. and Mrs. Lynch have gone to Manchester to-day. They will return to-morrow, and we hope to see them in the evening. Your mother will write you shortly, and I shall drop you a line every now and then, for I like to think of you and talk with you. To-day I walked to the Strand and back. All the way I saw the familiar shops that reminded me of you. Good-bye, my darling, for a brief space.

Affectionately yours,

EUGENE FIELD.

DEAR BOYS:—

I am hoping that you had a pleasant Christmas and that you did not drive Madame Ruhle wild with those boxing gloves. Your mother and I had a very quiet time, having agreed to make no presents to one another this year. We went to Mr. Lynch's on Christmas eve and saw little Leigh's Christmas tree, which was exceedingly pretty and covered with toys. We are anxious to know what each of you boys did with your five marks. You have not told us whether you have any skates or not. Little Leigh got a set of boxing gloves. How does it happen that Pinny wants another watch when he already has one? The watch I gave him ought to last a year at least. When you write letters, you should not devote them all to complaints about your brothers; you should tell us about what you are doing from day to day; how you are progressing in your studies and what difference you find between America and the German country. When I was of the age of Melvin, I used to write letters in Latin to my father; yet neither of you boys is able to write correctly in your own language. Hereafter I shall correct every misspelt word which occurs in your letters and shall send the list to you. You must take pains with your handwriting, remembering that every intelligent boy should write clearly and

neatly. Try to write your letters so correctly that when you are older you will have no occasion to be ashamed of them. I should like to know what you do each day from the time that you get up until the hour that you go to bed again. Your mother and I feel a deep interest in everything that concerns your daily life. We have all confidence in Prof. Ruhle; he may have to be firm with you, for all boys are inclined to be wilful sometimes, and then the teacher must discipline them. But you should know that during my absence Prof. Ruhle is responsible for you, and he is anxious that you should improve in your studies and in your deportment so much that when I come to Hanover again I shall see that improvement and be pleased. It is often hard to learn to be diligent, and patient, and obedient, but when one has learned that, he has learned the most important part of the lesson of life. I want to have you boys earnest in everything that you do; when you study, study hard, and when you play, play hard—then you will make good and useful men.

To-day I got a letter from Mr. Ballantyne; our Chicago friends are all well and little Joan is cutting teeth at a great rate. "Snip" is the same old "ootsing." Your mamma sends her love and so do I; we both hope to be very proud of you all.

Affectionately yours,

EUGENE FIELD.

LONDON, *Dec. 27th*, 1889.

MY EVER DEAREST TROTTY:—

Your mother thinks that perhaps it would be better for you to wait until we come to Hanover before having your pictures taken. In the mean time you must hasten to get over your sick spell, for I shall want you to take walks with me when I get there and it will not be very long now before we are with you. I have worried much about you all day, fearing that you might be seriously ill, but I have great faith in Miss Gensen's judgment, as well as in your own, and I ought not to worry, since I am sure that we should be informed by telegraph if you were so ill as to make our presence desirable. You must never hesitate about telegraphing when you deem it best. I am wondering whether little Dady got the two marks I sent to him in Pinny's care; I should be very much provoked if Pinny did not give them to him. I think that it would be unwise for Cousin Mary to send you a silk handkerchief; she might better send you the money and let you buy the handkerchief in Hanover. I hope that you are taking good care of the book of my stories which I sent you at Christmas time. That book will be worth a great deal of money sometime. Already they are offering \$25 for the two books in America—I mean the book of tales

and the book of verse. And the book, which is given by the author to the person to whom it is dedicated, is, of course, much more valuable than any other of its kind. You should keep all the letters I write to you. When I am gone, they will perhaps be a comfort to you as serving to remind you that your father loved you tenderly. The letters I had received from my father while I was at school were all burned up in a hotel fire at Galesburg; that was a loss never to be repaired. Your mother sends love, and we both pray for your speedy restoration to vigor. I shall drop you a line every day or two. With many, many kisses, dearest,

Yours ever lovingly,

EUGENE FIELD.

20 ALFRED PLACE, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.,
LONDON, *February 2d*, 1890.

MY DEAREST BOYS:—

I am getting quite lonely without you, and I shall be glad when the time comes for me to visit you in Hanover. I never supposed I could stay away from you so long, but it has probably been better for you, inasmuch as my being in Hanover might have interfered with your school duties. Your mother and I are very anxious that you should make rapid progress in your studies; few boys have the chance which you now have to acquire the German language and to become acquainted with the German people and their customs. Your mother and I are glad that we are able to give you the chance; it necessitates sacrifices upon our part, but we are happy to make them, so long as we are assured that our three men will become thereby honest and earnest men. Your mother and I have only one regret, and that is that we are not rich, for we should like to give you everything you want. But we are not rich; when you are older, you will have to earn your own livings, and therefore it behooves you to improve your opportunities now, for the reason that every bit of learning you acquire in youth will certainly make your after years easier and more profitable to you and your fellow-men. Pinny's birthday comes on the 29th of January; that will be next Wednesday. I shall send him a little

money, which I hope he will put into what will be amusement to you all. I should like to have him give fifty pfennigs to the poor, because we ought not to forget in every city the size of Hanover there are many people who suffer for want of clothing and food. For these poor people we should do what we can, no matter how little that may be. I have had dyspepsia badly for three days, owing to the cold which aggravated my illness. I am anxious that warm weather should come, in order that I may take more out-door exercise. I hope that you will not neglect to call upon Trotty; she wants to see you every Sunday. Mamma is wondering whether her little Dady boy will kiss her neck as he used to, and jump all over her. How is Melvin getting along with German? We hope that he will speak it nicely by the time we reach Hanover. The weather in London has improved somewhat. It is colder, but sunnier. Up to this time we have had fog almost continually. Little Leigh Lynch is very anxious to get back to Hanover to go to school with you boys. Give our love to Madame and Prof. Ruhle, and be careful to obey them and make them like you. God bless you, dearest boys. Let me hear often from you.

Ever affectionately yours,

EUGENE FIELD.

20 ALFRED PLACE, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.,
LONDON, *Jan. 2d*, 1890.

DEAREST TROTTY:—

I am hoping that this will reach you upon your birthday, for, although we defer making you a birthday gift until we come to Hanover, we want you to know that we think of you and that we celebrate with gratitude the anniversary of the day that brought us our dear daughter. You have always been so great a comfort and delight to me that I feel particularly tender towards you, and I should be happy if I could know that all through your life you would know nothing harsher than your father's love for you. The Lynches have been taking their Sunday dinner with us, and we have talked as usual of Hanover and of you and the boys. We shall have quite a reunion when we all meet in Germany. My health is improving steadily and I have begun to gain in weight again; still I have to be very careful as to what I eat. I send you many, many kisses and all my love, your mother joining in every affectionate remembrance. God bless you, dearest, and keep you in happiness.

Ever lovingly yours,

EUGENE FIELD.

20 ALFRED PLACE, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.,
LONDON, *March the 3d*, 1890.

MY DEAR BOY:—

You know of course that I sympathize deeply with you in the first great sorrow of your life—the death of dear Melvin, the brother who loved you so fondly and to whom you were so devotedly attached. It is a consolation to me to know that you boys thought so much of one another, but the thought of your loneliness fills me with grief. No one will ever fill that place in your heart which Melvin filled; he was good to you and loved you, and you, from infancy his playmate and companion, were always a loving brother to him. I am hoping—yes, I am sure that his memory will always be a beautiful thing for you to cling to; he was so gentle in his strength and so brave and patient in his suffering. I feel that the example of dear Melvin will serve as an inspiration to you in your future life. I believe that he is happier and better off now than if he were with us, for beautiful as the world is and attached as we become to human friendships, there is a more beautiful beyond wherein await friendships that death cannot sever. To that world we all go sooner or later, and it is there that you shall sometime meet your beloved brother in a love and a peace without end. God is good, my dearest, and He has done to us what

we should not regret. The blow seems harsh and unbearable, but presently we shall see that it is well. Melvin knows all the great mystery now. He sees us and loves us just as of old ; perhaps, unseen, he will join you in your play. Who knows but that God will appoint him to be your guardian angel ? I want you to feel, dearest, that your brother is not lost to you forever, but that some time you and he and we all shall be united in a love that has no parting. Meantime you should appreciate the circumstances that you are now our oldest boy on earth, and that there has suddenly devolved on you a certain responsibility, which, but for this sorrow, would not have fallen to your lot. You must feel that you are to take Melvin's place among us, seeking to be in a measure the protector of your younger brother, the guardian of your sister, and consolation of your mother, and a help to your father. You will try to be all this, I know, for I have faith in the valor of your purpose and the force of your endeavor. In about six months we shall return home ; meanwhile make diligent application to your studies ; be obedient, thoughtful, and kind ; acquire all the knowledge of German that you can, for it will be of service to you hereafter. Above all things, be patient, gentle, truthful, and manly, and then all will love you and be glad to help you. I don't know what your mother's plans are. She may want to remain in Hanover a time ; if so, I should go over with Trotty and

Dady about the 1st of November. When I come, I shall bring our stamp collection with me, and we will have many a good visit together. We are all well. Often we think and speak of you and mamma. Do kiss her for us all, and give our love to Madame Ruhle and to the Professor, to Fort, to Bobus, and to the rest, not even forgetting Helene.

Ever affectionately yours,

EUGENE FIELD.

3 MONTPELIER TERRACE, MONTPELIER SQUARE,
SOUTH KENSINGTON, *October 4th, 1890.*







PART IV
POEMS



CONTENTMENT

HAPPY the man that, when his day is done,
Lies down to sleep with nothing of regret—
The battle he has fought may not be won—
The fame he sought be just as fleeting yet ;
Folding at last his hands upon his breast,
Happy is he, if hoary and forespent,
He sinks into the last, eternal rest,
Breathing these only words : “ I am content.”

But happier he, that, while his blood is warm,
Sees hopes and friendships dead about him lie—
Bares his brave breast to envy's bitter storm,
Nor shuns the poison barbs of calumny ;
And 'mid it all, stands sturdy and elate,
Girt only in the armor God hath meant
For him who 'neath the buffetings of fate
Can say to God and man : “ I am content.”

“ FIDDLE-DEE-DEE ”

THERE once was a bird that lived up in a tree,
And all he could whistle was “ Fiddle-dee-dee ”—
A very provoking, unmusical song
For one to be whistling the summer day long !
Yet always contented and busy was he
With that vocal recurrence of “ Fiddle-dee-dee.”

Hard by lived a brave little soldier of four,
That weird iteration repented him sore ;
“ I prithee, Dear-Mother-Mine ! fetch me my gun,
For, by our St. Didy ! the deed must be done
That shall presently rid all creation and me
Of that ominous bird and his ‘ Fiddle-dee-dee ’ ! ”

Then out came Dear-Mother-Mine, bringing her
son

His awfully truculent little red gun ;
The stock was of pine and the barrel of tin,
The “ bang ” it came out where the bullet went
in—

The right kind of weapon I think you ’ll agree
For slaying all fowl that go “ Fiddle-dee-dee ” !

The brave little soldier quoth never a word,
But he up and he drew a straight bead on that
bird;

And, while that vain creature provokingly sang,
The gun it went off with a terrible bang!
Then loud laughed the youth—"By my Bottle,"
cried he,
"I've put a quietus on 'Fiddle-dee-dee'!"

Out came then Dear-Mother-Mine, saying: "My
son,
Right well have you wrought with your little red
gun!

Hereafter no evil at all need I fear,
With such a brave soldier as You-My-Love here!"
She kissed the dear boy.

[The bird in the tree
Continued to whistle his "Fiddle-dee-dee"!] 

GOLD AND LOVE FOR DEARIE

OUT on the mountain over the town,
All night long, all night long,
The trolls go up and the trolls go down,
Bearing their packs and crooning a song;
And this is the song the hill-folk croon,
As they trudge in the light of the misty moon,—

This is ever their dolorous tune :

“Gold, gold ! ever more gold,—
Bright red gold for dearie !”

Deep in the hill the yeoman delves

All night long, all night long ;

None but the peering, furtive elves

See his toil and hear his song ;

Merrily ever the cavern rings

As merrily ever his pick he swings,

And merrily ever this song he sings :

“Gold, gold ! ever more gold,—
Bright red gold for dearie !”

Mother is rocking thy lowly bed

All night long, all night long,

Happy to smooth thy curly head,

To hold thy hand and to sing *her* song :

’T’is not of the hill-folk dwarfed and old,

Nor the song of thy father, stanch and bold,

And the burthen it beareth is not of gold.

But it’s “Love, love ! nothing but love—

Mother’s love for dearie !”

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

WYNKEN, Blynken, and Nod one night

Sailed off in a wooden shoe—

Sailed on a river of crystal light,

Into a sea of dew.

“Where are you going, and what do you wish?”

The old moon asked the three.

“We have come to fish for the herring fish

That live in this beautiful sea;

Nets of silver and gold have we!”

Said Wynken,

Blynken,

And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,

As they rocked in the wooden shoe,

And the wind that sped them all night long

Ruffled the waves of dew.

The little stars were the herring fish

That lived in that beautiful sea—

“Now cast your nets wherever you wish—

Never afeard are we ;”

So cried the stars to the fishermen three :

Wynken,

Blynken,

And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw

To the stars in the twinkling foam—

Then down from the skies came the wooden
shoe,

Bringing the fishermen home ;

’T was all so pretty a sail it seemed

As if it could not be,

And some folks thought ’t was a dream they ’d
dreamed

Of sailing that beautiful sea—

But I shall name you the fishermen three :

Wynken,

Blynken,

And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,

And Nod is a little head,

And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies

Is a wee one’s trundle-bed.

So shut your eyes while mother sings

Of wonderful sights that be,

And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea,
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three :
 Wynken,
 Blynken,
 And Nod.

BUTTERCUP, POPPY, FORGET-ME-NOT

BUTTERCUP, Poppy, Forget-me-not—
These three bloomed in a garden spot ;
And once, all merry with song and play,
A little one heard three voices say :
 “ Shine and shadow, summer and spring,
 O thou child with the tangled hair
 And laughing eyes ! we three shall bring
 Each an offering passing fair.”
The little one did not understand,
But they bent and kissed the dimpled hand.

Buttercup gambolled all day long,
Sharing the little one's mirth and song ;
Then, stealing along on misty gleams,
Poppy came bearing the sweetest dreams.
 Playing and dreaming—and that was all
 Till once a sleeper would not awake ;

Kissing the little face under the pall,

We thought of the words the third flower
spake ;

And we found betimes in a hallowed spot
The solace and peace of Forget-me-not.

Buttercup shareth the joy of day,

Glinting with gold the hours of play ;

Bringeth the poppy sweet repose,

When the hands would fold and the eyes would
close ;

And after it all—the play and the sleep

Of a little life—what cometh then ?

To the hearts that ache and the eyes that weep

A new flower bringeth God's peace again.

Each one serveth its tender lot—

Buttercup, Poppy, Forget-me-not.

SHUFFLE-SHOON AND AMBER-LOCKS

SHUFFLE-SHOON and Amber-Locks

Sit together, building blocks ;

Shuffle-Shoon is old and gray,

Amber-Locks a little child,

But together at their play

Age and Youth are reconciled,

And with sympathetic glee

Build their castles fair to see.

"When I grow to be a man"

(So the wee one's prattle ran),

"I shall build a castle so—

With a gateway broad and grand ;

Here a pretty vine shall grow,

There a soldier guard shall stand ;

And the tower shall be so high,

Folks will wonder, by and by !"

Shuffle-Shoon quoth : "Yes, I know ;

Thus I builded long ago !

Here a gate and there a wall,

Here a window, there a door ;

Here a steeple wondrous tall

Riseth ever more and more !

But the years have leveled low

What I builded long ago !"

So they gossip at their play,

Heedless of the fleeting day ;

One speaks of the Long Ago

Where his dead hopes buried lie ;

One with chubby cheeks aglow

Prattleth of the By and By ;

Side by side, they build their blocks—

Shuffle-Shoon and Amber-Locks.

LONG AGO

I ONCE knew all the birds that came
And nested in our orchard trees ;
For every flower I had a name—
My friends were woodchucks, toads, and bees ;
I knew where thrived in yonder glen
What plants would soothe a stone-bruised toe—
Oh, I was very learned then ;
But that was very long ago !

I knew the spot upon the hill
Where checkerberries could be found,
I knew the rushes near the mill
Where pickerel lay that weighed a pound !
I knew the wood,—the very tree
Where lived the poaching, saucy crow,
And all the woods and crows knew me—
But that was very long ago.

And pining for the joys of youth,
I tread the old familiar spot
Only to learn this solemn truth :
I have forgotten, am forgot.

Yet here 's this youngster at my knee
Knows all the things I used to know ;
To think I once was wise as he—
But that was very long ago.

I know it 's folly to complain
Of whatsoe'er the Fates decree ;
Yet were not wishes all in vain,
I tell you what my wish should be :
I'd wish to be a boy again,
Back with the friends I used to know,
For I was, oh ! so happy then—
But that was very long ago !

NIGHTFALL IN DORDRECHT

THE mill goes toiling slowly around
With steady and solemn creak,
And my little one hears in the kindly sound
The voice of the old mill speak.
While round and round those big white wings
Grimly and ghostlike creep,
My little one hears that the old mill sings :
“ Sleep, little tulip, sleep ! ”

The sails are reefed and the nets are drawn,
And, over his pot of beer,

The fisher, against the morrow's dawn,
Lustily maketh cheer ;
He mocks at the winds that caper along
From the far-off clamorous deep—
But we—we love their lullaby song
Of " Sleep, little tulip, sleep ! "

Old dog Fritz in slumber sound
Groans of the stony mart—
To-morrow how proudly he 'll trot you round,
Hitched to our new milk-cart !
And you shall help me blanket the kine
And fold the gentle sheep
And set the herring a-soak in brine—
But now, little tulip, sleep !

A Dream-One comes to button the eyes
That wearily droop and blink,
While the old mill buffets the frowning skies
And scolds at the stars that wink ;
Over your face the misty wings
Of that beautiful Dream-One sweep,
And rocking your cradle she softly sings :
" Sleep, little tulip, sleep ! "

SEEIN' THINGS

I AIN'T afeard uv snakes, or toads, or bugs, or
worms, or mice,

An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are
awful nice!

I'm pretty brave, I guess; an' yet I hate to go
to bed,

For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an'
when my prayers are said,

Mother tells me "Happy dreams!" and takes
away the light,

An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at
night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes
they're by the door,

Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle
uv the floor;

Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes
they're walkin' round

So softly an' so creepylike they never make a
sound!

Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other
times they're white—

But the color ain't no difference when you see
things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved
on our street,

An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to
eat,

I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in
a row,

A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me—
so!

Oh, my! I wuz so skeered that time I never slep'
a mite—

It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at
night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl, or I'd be skeered to
death!

Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my
breath;

An' I am, oh! so sorry I'm a naughty boy, an'
then

I promise to be better an' I say my prayers
again!

Gran'ma tells me that 's the only way to make it
right

When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at
night !

An' so, when other naughty boys would coax me
into sin,

I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me
within ;

An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at 's
big an' nice,

I want to—but I do not pass my plate f'r them
things twice !

No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o'
sight

Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things
at night !

THE DREAM-SHIP

WHEN the world is fast asleep,
Along the midnight skies—
'As though it were a wandering cloud—
The ghostly dream-ship flies.

An angel stands at the dream-ship's helm,
An angel stands at the prow,
And an angel stands at the dream-ship's side
With a rue-wreath on her brow.

The other angels, silver-crowned,
Pilot and helmsman are,
And the angel with the wreath of rue
Tosseth the dreams afar.

The dreams they fall on rich and poor ;
They fall on young and old ;
And some are dreams of poverty,
And some are dreams of gold.

And some are dreams that thrill with joy,
And some that melt to tears ;
Some are dreams of the dawn of love,
And some of the old dead years.

On rich and poor alike they fall,
Alike on young and old,
Bringing to slumbering earth their joys
And sorrows manifold.

The friendless youth in them shall do
The deeds of mighty men,
And drooping age shall feel the grace
Of buoyant youth again.

The king shall be a beggarman—
The pauper be a king—
In that revenge or recompense
The dream-ship dreams do bring.

So ever downward float the dreams
That are for all and me,
And there is never mortal man
Can solve that mystery.

But ever onward in its course
Along the haunted skies—
As though it were a cloud astray—
The ghostly dream-ship flies.

Two angels with their silver crowns
Pilot and helmsman are,
And an angel with a wreath of rue
Tosseth the dreams afar.





MARGARET : A PEARL





MARGARET: A PEARL

IN a certain part of the sea, very many leagues from here, there once lived a large family of oysters noted for their beauty and size. But among them was one so small, so feeble, and so ill-looking as to excite the pity, if not the contempt of all the others.

The father, a venerable, bearded oyster, of august appearance and solemn deportment, was much mortified that one of his family should happen to be so sickly; and he sent for all the doctors in the sea to come and treat her; from which circumstance you are to note that doctors are an evil to be met with not alone upon *terra firma*.

The first to come was Dr. Porpoise, a gentleman of the old school, who floundered around in a very important manner and was full of imposing ceremonies.

"Let me look at your tongue," said Dr. Porpoise, stroking his beard with one fin, impressively. "Ahem! somewhat coated, I see. And your pulse is far from normal; no appetite, I presume? Yes, my dear, your system is sadly out of order. You need medicine."

The little oyster hated medicine ; so she cried, —yes, she actually shed cold, briny tears at the very thought of taking old Dr. Porpoise's prescriptions. But the father-oyster and the mother-oyster chided her sternly ; they said that the medicine would be nice and sweet, and that the little oyster would like it. But the little oyster knew better than all that ; yes, she knew a thing or two, even though she *was* only a little oyster.

Now Dr. Porpoise put a plaster on the little oyster's chest and a blister at her feet. He bade her eat nothing but a tiny bit of sea-foam on toast twice a day. Every two hours she was to take a spoonful of cod-liver oil, and before each meal a wineglassful of the essence of distilled cuttlefish. The plaster she did n't mind, but the blister and the cod-liver oil were terrible ; and when it came to the essence of distilled cuttlefish—well, she just could n't stand it !

In vain her mother reasoned with her, and promised her a new doll and a skipping-rope and a lot of other nice things : the little oyster would have none of the horrid drug ; until at last her father, abandoning his dignity in order to maintain his authority, had to hold her down by main strength and pour the medicine into her mouth. This was, as you will allow, quite dreadful.

But this treatment did the little oyster no good ; and her parents made up their minds that they would send for another doctor, and one of a dif-

ferent school. Fortunately they were in a position to indulge in almost any expense, since the father-oyster himself was president of one of the largest banks of Newfoundland. So Dr. Sculpin came with his neat little medicine-box under his arm. And when he had looked at the sick little oyster's tongue, and had taken her temperature, and had felt her pulse, he said he knew what ailed her; but he did not tell anybody what it was. He threw away the plasters, the blisters, the cod-liver oil, and the essence of distilled cuttlefish, and said it was a wonder that the poor child had lived through it all!

"Will you please bring me two tumblerfuls of water?" he remarked to the mother-oyster.

The mother-oyster scuttled away, and soon returned with two conch-shells filled to the brim with pure, clear sea-water. Dr. Sculpin counted three grains of white sand into one shell, and three grains of yellow sand into the other shell, with great care.

"Now," said he to the mother-oyster, "I have numbered these 1 and 2. First, you are to give the patient ten drops out of No. 2, and in an hour after that, eight drops out of No. 1; the next hour, eight drops out of No. 2; and the next, or fourth, hour, ten drops out of No. 1. And so you are to continue hour by hour, until either the medicine or the child gives out."

"Tell me, doctor," asked the mother, "shall she continue the food suggested by Dr. Porpoise?"

"What food did he recommend?" inquired Dr. Sculpin.

"Sea-foam on toast," answered the mother.

Dr. Sculpin smiled a smile which seemed to suggest that Dr. Porpoise's ignorance was really quite annoying.

"My dear madam," said Dr. Sculpin, "the diet suggested by that quack, Porpoise, passed out of the books years ago. Give the child toast on sea-foam, if you wish to build up her health."

Now, the sick little oyster did not object to this treatment; on the contrary, she liked it. But it did her no good. And one day, when she was feeling very dry, she drank both tumblerfuls of medicine, and it did not do her any harm; neither did it cure her: she remained the same sick little oyster,—oh, so sick! This pained her parents very much. They did not know what to do. They took her travelling; they gave her into the care of the eel for electric treatment; they sent her to the Gulf Stream for warm baths,—they tried everything, but to no avail. The sick little oyster remained a sick little oyster, and there was an end of it.

At last one day,—one cruel, fatal day,—a horrid, fierce-looking machine was poked down from the surface of the water far above, and with slow but intrepid movement began exploring every nook and crevice of the oyster village. There was not a family into which it did not in-

trude, nor a home circle whose sanctity it did not ruthlessly invade. It scraped along the great mossy rock ; and lo ! with a monstrous scratchy-te-scratch, the mother-oyster and the father-oyster and hundreds of other oysters were torn from their resting-places and borne aloft in a very jumbled and very frightened condition by the impertinent machine.

Then down it came again, and the sick little oyster was among the number of those who were seized by the horrid monster this time. She found herself raised to the top of the sea ; and all at once she was bumped in a boat, where she lay, puny and helpless, on a huge pile of other oysters. Two men were handling the fierce-looking machine. A little boy sat in the stern of the boat watching the huge pile of oysters. He was a pretty little boy, with bright eyes and long tangled hair. He wore no hat, and his feet were bare and brown.

“What a funny little oyster !” said the boy, picking up the sick little oyster ; “it is no bigger than my thumb, and it is very pale.”

“Throw it away,” said one of the men. “Like as not it is bad and not fit to eat.”

“No, keep it and send it out West for a Blue Point,” said the other man,—what a heartless wretch he was !

But the little boy had already thrown the sick little oyster overboard. She fell in shallow water, and the rising tide carried her still farther

toward shore, until she lodged against an old gum boot that lay half buried in the sand. There were no other oysters in sight. Her head ached and she was very weak; how lonesome, too, she was!—yet anything was better than being eaten,—at least so thought the little oyster, and so, I presume, think you.

For many weeks and many months the sick little oyster lay hard by the old gum boot; and in that time she made many acquaintances and friends among the crabs, the lobsters, the fiddlers, the star-fish, the waves, the shells, and the gay little fishes of the ocean. They did not harm her, for they saw that she was sick; they pitied her—some loved her. The one that loved her most was the perch with green fins that attended school every day in the academic shade of the big rocks in the quiet cove about a mile away.

He was very gentle and attentive, and every afternoon he brought fresh cool sea-foam for the sick oyster to eat; he told her pretty stories, too,—stories which his grandmother, the venerable codfish, had told him of the sea king, the mermaids, the pixies, the water sprites and the other beautiful dwellers in ocean-depths.

Now while all this was very pleasant, the sick little oyster knew that the perch's wooing was hopeless, for she was very ill and helpless, and could never think of becoming a burden upon one so young and so promising as the gallant perch

with green fins. But when she spoke to him in this strain, he would not listen; he kept right on bringing her more and more cool sea-foam every day.

The old gum boot was quite a motherly creature, and anon the sick little oyster became very much attached to her. Many times as the little invalid rested her aching head affectionately on the instep of the old gum boot, the old gum boot told her stories of the world beyond the sea; how she had been born in a mighty forest, and how proud her folks were of their family tree; how she had been taken from that forest and moulded into the shape she now bore; how she had graced and served a foot in amphibious capacities, until at last, having seen many things and having travelled much, she had been cast off and hurled into the sea to be the scorn of every crab and the derision of every fish.

These stories were all new to the little oyster, and amazing, too; she knew only of the sea, having lived therein all her life. She in turn told the old gum boot quaint legends of the ocean,—the simple tales she had heard in her early home; and there was a sweetness and a simplicity in these stories of the deep that charmed the old gum boot, shrivelled and hardened and pessimistic though she was.

Yet, in spite of it all,—the kindness, the care, the amusements, and the devotion of her friends,—the little oyster remained always a sick and

fragile thing. But no one heard her complain, for she bore her suffering patiently.

Not far from this beach where the ocean ended its long travels there was a city, and in this city there dwelt with her parents a maiden of the name of Margaret. From infancy she had been sickly, and although she had now reached the years of early womanhood, she could not run or walk about as others did, but she had to be wheeled hither and thither in a chair.

This was very sad ; yet Margaret was so gentle and uncomplaining that from aught she said you never would have thought her life was full of suffering. Seeing her helplessness, the sympathetic things of Nature had compassion and were very good to Margaret. The sunbeams stole across her pathway everywhere, the grass clustered thickest and greenest where she went, the winds caressed her gently as they passed, and the birds loved to perch near her window and sing their prettiest songs. Margaret loved them all,—the sunlight, the singing winds, the grass, the carolling birds. She communed with them ; their wisdom inspired her life, and this wisdom gave her nature a rare beauty.

Every pleasant day Margaret was wheeled from her home in the city down to the beach, and there for hours she would sit, looking out, far out upon the ocean, as if she were communing with the ocean spirits that lifted up their white arms

from the restless waters and beckoned her to come. Oftentimes the children playing on the beach came where Margaret sat, and heard her tell little stories of the pebbles and the shells, of the ships away out at sea, of the ever-speeding gulls, of the grass, of the flowers, and of the other beautiful things of life ; and so in time the children came to love Margaret.

Among those who so often gathered to hear the gentle sick girl tell her pretty stories was a youth of Margaret's age,--older than the others, a youth with sturdy frame and a face full of candor and earnestness. His name was Edward, and he was a student in the city ; he hoped to become a great scholar sometime, and he toiled very zealously to the end. The patience, the gentleness, the sweet simplicity, the fortitude of the sick girl charmed him.

He found in her little stories a quaint and beautiful philosophy he never yet had found in books ; there was a valor in her life he never yet had read of in the histories.

So, every day she came and sat upon the beach, Edward came too ; and with the children he heard Margaret's stories of the sea, the air, the grass, the birds, and the flowers.

From her moist eyrie in the surf the old gum boot descried the group upon the beach each pleasant day. Now the old gum boot had seen enough of the world to know a thing or two, as we presently shall see.

"That tall young man is not a child," quoth the old gum boot, "yet he comes every day with the children to hear the sick girl tell her stories! Ah, ha!"

"Perhaps he is the doctor," suggested the little oyster; and then she added with a sigh, "but oh! I hope not."

This suggestion seemed to amuse the old gum boot highly; at least she fell into such hysterical laughter that she sprang a leak near her little toe, which, considering her environments, was a serious mishap.

"Unless I am greatly mistaken, my child," said the old gum boot to the little oyster, "that young man is in love with the sick girl!"

"Oh, how terrible!" said the little oyster; and she meant it too, for she was thinking of the gallant young perch with green fins.

"Well, I've said it, and I mean it!" continued the old gum boot; "now just wait and see."

The old gum boot had guessed aright—so much for the value of worldly experience! Edward loved Margaret; to him she was the most beautiful, the most perfect being in the world; her very words seemed to exalt his nature. Yet he never spoke to her of love. He was content to come with the children to hear her stories, to look upon her sweet face, and to worship her in silence. Was not that a very wondrous love?

In course of time the sick girl Margaret became more interested in the little ones that thronged

daily to hear her pretty stories, and she put her beautiful fancies into the little songs and quaint poems and tender legends,—songs and poems and legends about the sea, the flowers, the birds, and the other beautiful creations of Nature; and in all there was a sweet simplicity, a delicacy, a reverence, that bespoke Margaret's spiritual purity and wisdom. In this teaching, and marvelling ever at its beauty, Edward grew to manhood. She was his inspiration, yet he never spoke of love to Margaret. And so the years went by.

Beginning with the children, the world came to know the sick girl's power. Her songs were sung in every home, and in every home her verses and her little stories were repeated. And so it was that Margaret came to be beloved of all, but he who loved her best spoke never of his love to her.

And as these years went by, the sick little oyster lay in the sea cuddled close to the old gum boot. She was wearier now than ever before, for there was no cure for her malady. The gallant perch with green fins was very sad, for his wooing had been hopeless. Still he was devoted, and still he came each day to the little oyster, bringing her cool sea-foam and other delicacies of the ocean. Oh, how sick the little oyster was! But the end came at last.

The children were on the beach one day, waiting for Margaret, and they wondered that she did not come. Presently, grown restless, many

of the boys scampered into the water and stood there, with their trousers rolled up, boldly daring the little waves that rippled up from the overflow of the surf. And one little boy happened upon the old gum boot. It was a great discovery.

"See the old gum boot," cried the boy, fishing it out of the water and holding it on high. "And here is a little oyster fastened to it! How funny!"

The children gathered round the curious object on the beach. None of them had ever seen such a funny old gum boot, and surely none of them had ever seen such a funny little oyster. They tore the pale, knotted little thing from her foster-mother, and handled her with such rough curiosity that even had she been a robust oyster she must certainly have died. At any rate, the little oyster was dead now; and the bereaved perch with green fins must have known it, for he swam up and down his native cove disconsolately.

It befell in that same hour that Margaret lay upon her deathbed, and knowing that she had not long to live, she sent for Edward. And Edward, when he came to her, was filled with anguish, and clasping her hands in his, he told her of his love.

Then Margaret answered him: "I knew it, dear one; and all the songs I have sung and all the words I have spoken and all the prayers I have made have been with you, dear one,—all with *you* in my heart of hearts."

"You have purified and exalted my life," cried Edward; "you have been my best and sweetest inspiration; you have taught me the eternal truth,—you are my beloved!"

And Margaret said: "Then in my weakness hath there been a wondrous strength, and from my sufferings cometh the glory I have sought!"

So Margaret died, and like a broken lily she lay upon her couch; and all the sweetness of her pure and gentle life seemed to come back and rest upon her face; and the songs she had sung and the beautiful stories she had told came back, too, on angel wings, and made sweet music in that chamber.

The children were lingering on the beach when Edward came that day. He could hear them singing the songs Margaret had taught them. They wondered that he came alone.

"See," cried one of the boys, running to meet him and holding a tiny shell in his hand,—“see what we have found in this strange little shell. Is it not beautiful!"

Edward took the dwarfed, misshapen thing, and lo! it held a beauteous pearl.







PART V
POEMS



COBBLER AND STORK

Cobbler.

STORK, I am justly wroth,
For thou hast wronged me sore ;
The ash roof-tree that shelters thee
Shall shelter thee no more !

Stork.

Full fifty years I 've dwelt
Upon this honest tree,
And long ago (as people know !)
I brought thy father thee.
What hail hath chilled thy heart,
That thou shouldst bid me go ?
Speak out, I pray—then I 'll away,
Since thou commandest so.

Cobbler.

Thou tellest of the time
When, wheeling from the west,
This hut thou sought'st and one thou
brought'st
Unto a mother's breast.

I was the wretched child
Was fetched that dismal morn—
'T were better die than be (as I)
To life of misery born!
And hadst thou borne me on
Still farther up the town,
A king I'd be of high degree,
And wear a golden crown!
For yonder lives the prince
Was brought that selfsame day:
How happy he, while—look at me!
I toil my life away!
And see my little boy—
To what estate he's born!
Why, when I die no hoard leave I
But poverty and scorn.
And *thou* hast done it all—
I might have been a king
And ruled in state, but for thy hate,
Thou base, perfidious thing!

Stork.

Since, cobbler, thou dost speak
Of one thou lovest well,
Hear of that king what grievous thing
This very morn befell.

Whilst round thy homely bench
Thy well-belovèd played,
In yonder hall beneath a pall
A little one was laid ;
Thy well-belovèd's face
Was rosy with delight,
But 'neath that pall in yonder hall
The little face is white ;
Whilst by a merry voice
Thy soul is filled with cheer,
Another weeps for one that sleeps
All mute and cold anear ;
One father hath his hope,
And one is childless now ;
He wears a crown and rules a town—
Only a cobbler *thou* !
Wouldst thou exchange thy lot
At price of such a woe ?
I'll nest no more above thy door,
But, as thou bidst me, go.

Cobbler.

Nay, stork ! thou shalt remain—
I mean not what I said ;
Good neighbors we must always be,
So make thy home o'erhead.
I would not change my bench

For any monarch's throne,
Nor sacrifice at any price
My darling and my own!
Stork! on my roof-tree bide,
That, seeing thee anear,
I'll thankful be God sent by thee
Me and my darling here!

JEST 'FORE CHRISTMAS

FATHER calls me William, sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers call me
Bill!
Mighty glad I ain't a girl—ruther be a boy,
Without them sashes, curls, an' things that 's worn
by Fauntleroy!
Love to chawnk green apples an' go swimmin' in
the lake—
Hate to take the castor-ile they give for belly-
ache!
'Most all the time, the whole year round, there
ain't no flies on me,
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!
Got a yellor dog named Sport, sick him on the
cat;
First thing she knows she does n't know where
she is at!

Got a clipper sled, an' when us kids goes out to
slide,

'Long comes the grocery cart, an' we all hook a
ride!

But sometimes when the grocery man is worried
an' cross,

He reaches at us with his whip, an' larrups up
his hoss,

An' then I laff and holler, " Oh, ye never teched
me! "

But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I git to be a
man,

I'll be a missionarer like her oldest brother, Dan,
As was et up by the cannibuls that lives in Cey-
lon's Isle,

Where every prospeck pleases, an' only man is
vile!

But gran'ma she has never been to see a Wild
West show,

Nor read the Life of Daniel Boone, or else I
guess she'd know

That Buff'lo Bill an' cow-boys is good enough for
me!

Except jest 'fore Christmas, when I'm good as I
kin be!

And then old Sport he hangs around, so solemnly
an' still,

His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What 's the mat-
ter, little Bill?"

The old cat sneaks down off her perch an' won-
ders what 's become

Of them two enemies of hern that used to make
things hum!

But I am so perlite an' 'tend so earnestly to biz,
That mother says to father: "How improved
our Willie is!"

But father, havin' been a boy hisself, suspicions me
When, just 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin
be!

For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of candies,
cakes, and toys,

Was made, they say, for proper kids an' not for
naughty boys;

So wash yer face an' bresh yer hair, an' mind yer
p's and q's,

An' don't bust out yer pantaloons, and don't
wear out yer shoes;

Say "Yessum" to the ladies, an' "Yessur" to
the men,

An' when they's company, don't pass yer plate
for pie again;

But, thinkin' of the things yer 'd like to see upon
that tree,
Jest 'fore Christmas be as good as yer kin be !

GANDERFEATHER'S GIFT

I WAS just a little thing
When a fairy came and kissed me ;
Floating in upon the light
Of a haunted summer night,
Lo, the fairies came to sing
Pretty slumber songs and bring
Certain boons that else had missed me.
From a dream I turned to see
What those strangers brought for me,
When that fairy up and kissed me—
Here, upon this cheek, he kissed me !

Simmerdew was there, but she
Did not like me altogether ;
Daisybright and Turtledove,
Pilfercurds and Honeylove,
Thistleblow and Amberglee
On that gleaming, ghostly sea
Floated from the misty heather,
And around my trundle-bed

Frisked, and looked, and whispering said—
Solemnlike and all together :
“ *You* shall kiss him, Ganderfeather ! ”

Ganderfeather kissed me then—
Ganderfeather, quaint and merry !
No attenuate sprite was he,
—But as buxom as could be ;—
Kissed me twice, and once again,
And the others shouted when
On my cheek uprose a berry
Somewhat like a mole, mayhap,
But the kiss-mark of that chap
Ganderfeather, passing merry—
Humorsome, but kindly, very !

I was just a tiny thing
When the prankish Ganderfeather
Brought this curious gift to me
With his fairy kisses three ;
Yet with honest pride I sing
That same gift he chose to bring
Out of yonder haunted heather.
Other charms and friendships fly—
Constant friends this mole and I,
Who have been so long together.
Thank you, little Ganderfeather !

OUR BIGGEST FISH

WHEN in the halcyon days of eld, I was a little
tyke,

I used to fish in pickerel ponds for minnows and
the like ;

And oh, the bitter sadness with which my soul
was fraught

When I rambled home at nightfall with the puny
string I'd caught !

And, oh, the indignation and the valor I'd
display

When I claimed that all the biggest fish I'd
caught had got away !

Sometimes it was the rusty hooks, sometimes the
fragile lines,

And many times the treacherous reeds would foil
my just designs ;

But whether hooks or lines or reeds were actually
to blame

I kept right on at losing all the monsters just the
same—

I never lost a *little* fish—yes, I am free to say

It always was the *biggest* fish I caught that got
away.

And so it was, when later on, I felt ambition
pass
From callow minnow joys to nobler greed for
pike and bass ;
I found it quite convenient, when the beauties
would n't bite
And I returned all bootless from the watery chase
at night,
To feign a cheery aspect and recount in accents
gay
How the biggest fish that I had caught had some-
how got away.

And really, fish look bigger than they are before
they 're caught—
When the pole is bent into a bow and the slender
line is taut,
When a fellow feels his heart rise up like a dough-
nut in his throat
And he lunges in a frenzy up and down the leaky
boat !
Oh, you who've been a-fishing will indorse me
when I say
That it always *is* the biggest fish you catch that
gets away !

'T is even so in other things—yes, in our greedy
eyes

The biggest boon is some elusive, never-captured
prize ;

We angle for the honors and the sweets of human
life—

Like fishermen we brave the seas that roll in end-
less strife ;

And then at last, when all is done and we are
spent and gray,

We own the biggest fish we've caught are those
that got away.

I would not have it otherwise ; 't is better there
should be

Much bigger fish than I have caught a-swimming
in the sea ;

For now some worthier one than I may angle for
that game—

May by his arts entice, entrap, and comprehend
the same ;

Which, having done, perchance he'll bless the
man who's proud to say

That the biggest fish he ever caught were those
that got away.

OUR TWO OPINIONS

Us two wuz boys when we fell out,—
Nigh to the age uv my youngest now ;
Don't rec'lect what 't wuz about,
Some small deeff'rence, I 'll allow.
Lived next neighbors twenty years,
A-hatin' each other, me 'nd Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

Grew up together 'nd would n't speak,
Court'd sisters, 'nd marr'd 'em, too ;
'Tended same meetin'-house oncet a week,
A-hatin' each other through 'nd through !
But when Abe Linkern asked the West
F'r soldiers, we answered,—me 'nd Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

But down in Tennessee one night
Ther wuz sound uv firin' fur away,
'Nd the sergeant allowed ther 'd be a fight
With the Johnnie Rebs some time nex' day ;

'Nd as I wuz thinkin' uv Lizzie 'nd home

Jim stood afore me, long 'nd slim.—

He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,

'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

Seemed like we knew there wuz goin' to be

Serious trouble f'r me 'nd him;

Us two shuck hands, did Jim and me,

But never a word from me or Jim!

He went *his* way 'nd *I* went *mine*,

'Nd into the battle's roar went we,—

I havin' *my* opinyin uv Jim,

'Nd *he* havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*.

Jim never come back from the war again,

But I hain't forgot that last, last night

When, waitin' f'r orders, us two men

Made up 'nd shuck hands, afore the fight.

'Nd, after it all, it 's soothin' to know

That here *I* be 'nd yonder 's Jim,—

He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,

'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

THE SINGING IN GOD'S ACRE

OUT yonder in the moonlight, wherein God's
Acre lies,

Go angels walking to and fro, singing their
lullabies.

Their radiant wings are folded, and their eyes
are bended low,

As they sing among the beds whereon the flowers
delight to grow,—

“Sleep, oh, sleep!

The Shepherd guardeth His sheep.

Fast speedeth the night away,

Soon cometh the glorious day;

Sleep, weary ones, while ye may,

Sleep, oh, sleep!”

The flowers within God's Acre see that fair and
wondrous sight,

And hear the angels singing to the sleepers
through the night;

And, lo! throughout the hours of day those
gentle flowers prolong

The music of the angels in that tender slumber-
song,— •

“Sleep, oh, sleep!

The Shepherd loveth His sheep.

He that guardeth His flock the best
Hath folded them to His loving breast ;
So sleep ye now, and take your rest,—
Sleep, oh, sleep !”

From angel and from flower the years have
learned that soothing song,
And with its heavenly music speed the days and
nights along ;
So through all time, whose flight the Shepherd’s
vigils glorify,
God’s Acre slumbereth in the grace of that sweet
lullaby,—

“ Sleep, oh, sleep :
The Shepherd loveth His sheep.
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day ;
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may,—
Sleep, oh, sleep !”

HI-SPI

STRANGE that the city thoroughfare,
Noisy and bustling all the day,
Should with the night renounce its care
And lend itself to children’s play !

Oh, girls are girls, and boys are boys,
And have been so since Abel's birth,
And shall be so 'til dolls and toys
Are with the children swept from earth.

The self-same sport that crowns the day
Of many a Syrian shepherd's son,
Beguiles the little lads at play
By night in stately Babylon.

I hear their voices in the street,
Yet 't is so different now from then !
Come, brother ! from your winding-sheet,
And let us two be boys again !

IN THE FIRELIGHT

THE fire upon the hearth is low,
And there is stillness everywhere,
While like winged spirits, here and there,
The firelight shadows fluttering go.
And as the shadows round me creep,
A childish treble breaks the gloom,
And softly from a further room
Comes, " Now I lay me down to sleep."

And somehow, with that little prayer
And that sweet treble in my ears,
My thoughts go back to distant years
And linger with a loved one there ;
And as I hear my child's amen,
My mother's faith comes back to me,—
Crouched at her side I seem to be,
And Mother holds my hands again.
Oh, for an hour in that dear place !
Oh, for the peace of that dear time !
Oh, for that childish trust sublime !
Oh, for a glimpse of Mother's face !
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,
I do not seem to be alone,—
Sweet magic of that treble tone,
And " Now I lay me down to sleep."

THE STODDARDS

WHEN I am in New York, I like to drop around
at night,
To visit with my honest, genial friends, the Stod-
dards hight ;
Their home in Fifteenth street is all so snug, and
furnished so,
That, when I once get planted there, I don't
know when to go ;

A cosy cheerful refuge for the weary homesick
guest,
Combining Yankee comforts with the freedom of
the west.

The first thing you discover, as you maunder
through the hall,
Is a curious little clock upon a bracket on the
wall ;
'T was made by Stoddard's father, and it's very,
very old—
The connoisseurs assure me it is worth its weight
in gold ;
And I, who've bought all kinds of clocks, 'twixt
Denver and the Rhine,
Cast envious eyes upon that clock, and wish that
it were mine.

But in the parlor. Oh, the gems on tables, walls,
and floor—
Rare first editions, etchings, and old crockery
galore.
Why, talk about the Indies and the wealth of
Orient things—
They could n't hold a candle to these quaint and
sumptuous things ;

In such profusion, too—Ah me! how dearly I
recall

How I have sat and watched 'em and wished I
had 'em all.

Now, Mr. Stoddard's study is on the second
floor,

A wee blind dog barks at me as I enter through
the door;

The Cerberus would fain begrudge what sights it
cannot see,

The rapture of that visual feast it cannot share
with me;

A miniature edition this—this most absurd of
hounds—

A genuine unique, I'm sure, and one unknown
to Lowndes.

Books—always books—are piled around; some
musty, and all old;

Tall, solemn folios such as Lamb declared he
loved to hold;

Large paper copies with their virgin margins white
and wide,

And presentation volumes with the author's
comps. inside;

I break the tenth commandment with a wild im-
passioned cry :

Oh, how came Stoddard by these things? Why
Stoddard and not I?

From yonder wall looks Thackeray upon his poet
friend,

And underneath the genial face appear the lines
he penned ;

And here, gadzooks, ben honge ye prynte of
marvailous renowne

Yt shameth Chaucers gallaunt knyghtes in Can-
terbury towne ;

And still more books and pictures. I'm dazed,
bewildered, vexed ;

Since I've broke the tenth commandment, why
not break the eighth one next?

And, furthermore, in confidence inviolate be it
said

Friend Stoddard owns a lock of hair that grew
on Milton's head ;

Now I have Gladstone axes and a lot of curious
things,

Such as pimply Dresden teacups and old German
wedding-rings ;

But nothing like that saintly lock have I on wall
or shelf,

And, being somewhat short of hair, I should like
that lock myself.

But Stoddard has a soothing way, as though he
grieved to see

Invidious torments prey upon a nice young chap
like me,

He waves me to an easy chair and hands me out
a weed

And pumps me full of that advice he seems to
know I need ;

So sweet the tap of his philosophy and knowl-
edge flows

That I can't help wishing that I knew a half
what Stoddard knows.

And so we sit for hours and hours, praising with-
out restraint

The people who are thoroughbreds, and roasting
the ones that ain't ;

Happy, thrice happy, is the man we happen to
admire,

But wretched, oh, how wretched he that hath
provoked our ire ;

For I speak emphatic English when I once get
fairly r'iled,

And Stoddard's wrath's an Ossa upon a Pelion
piled.

Out yonder, in the alcove, a lady sits and darns,
And interjects remarks that always serve to spice
our yarns;

She's Mrs. Stoddard; there's a dame that's truly
to my heart:

A tiny little woman, but so quaint, and good,
and smart

That, if you asked me to suggest which one I
should prefer

Of all the Stoddard treasures, I should promptly
mention her.

O dear old man, how I should like to be with
you this night,

Down in your home in Fifteenth street, where
all is snug and bright;

Where the shaggy little Cerberus dreams in its
cushioned place,

And the books and pictures all around smile in
their old friend's face;

Where the dainty little sweetheart, whom you
still were proud to woo,

Charms back the tender memories so dear to her
and you.

THE WANDERER

UPON a mountain height, far from the sea
 I found a shell,
And to my listening ear the lonely thing
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,
 Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell.

How came the shell upon that mountain height?
 Ah, who can say
Whether there dropped by some too careless hand,
Or whether there cast when Ocean swept the Land,
 Ere the Eternal had ordained the Day?

Strange, was it not? Far from its native deep,
 One song it sang,—
Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,
Sang of the misty sea, profound and wide,—
 Ever with echoes of the ocean rang.

And as the shell upon the mountain height
 Sings of the sea,
So do I ever, leagues and leagues away,—
So do I ever, wandering where I may,—
 Sing, O my home! sing, O my home! of thee.

SOME TIME

LAST night, my darling, as you slept,
I thought I heard you sigh,
And to your little crib I crept,
And watched a space thereby;
And then I stooped and kissed your brow,
For oh! I love you so—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you shall know!

Some time when, in a darkened place
Where others come to weep,
Your eyes shall look upon a face
Calm in eternal sleep,
The voiceless lips, the wrinkled brow,
The patient smile shall show—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you may know!

Look backward, then, into the years
And see me here to-night—
See, O my darling! how my tears
Are falling as I write;

And feel once more upon your brow
The kiss of long ago—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you will know.





A CHAPTER OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY





FIELD'S STORY OF HIS LIFE

IN an amusing leaflet published by Eugene Field he says : " I give these facts, confessions, and observations for the information of those who, for one reason or another, are constantly applying to me for biographical data concerning myself."

He continues as follows :—

I was born in St. Louis, Missouri, September 3d, 1850, the second, and oldest surviving, son of Roswell Martin and Frances (Reed) Field, both natives of Windham County, Vermont.

Upon the death of my mother, I was put in the care of my (paternal) cousin, Miss Mary Field French, at Amherst, Mass., and there fitted for Williams College, which institution I entered as a freshman in 1868. Upon the death of my father, in 1869, I entered the Sophomore class of Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, John W. Burgess, now of Columbia College, being then a professor in that institution. But in 1870 I went to Columbia, Missouri, and entered the State University there, and completed the junior year with my brother.

In 1872, I visited Europe, spending six months and my patrimony in France, Italy, Ireland, and England.

In May, 1873, I became a reporter on the "St. Louis Evening Journal." In October of that year I married Miss Julia Sutherland Comstock, of St. Joseph, Missouri, at that time a girl of sixteen. We have had three daughters and five sons.

Ill health compelled me to visit Europe in 1889; there I remained fourteen months, that time being divided between England, Germany, Holland, and Belgium. My residence at present is in Buena Park, a north-shore suburb of Chicago.

I have a miscellaneous collection of books numbering 3,500, and I am fond of the quaint and curious in every line. I am very fond of dogs, birds, and all such small pets—a passion not approved of by my wife. My favorite flower is the carnation. My favorites in fiction are Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," "Don Quixote" and "Pilgrim's Progress." I greatly love Hans Christian Andersen's Tales, and I am deeply interested in folk-lore and fairy-tales. I believe in ghosts, in witches, and in fairies. I should like to own a big astronomical telescope, a twenty-four-tune music-box. I adore dolls.

My heroes in history are Martin Luther, Madame Lamballe, Abraham Lincoln; my favorite poems are Korner's "Battle Prayer," Wordsworth's "We are Seven," Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light," Luther's Hymn, Schiller's "The

Diver," Horace's "Bandusiæ," and Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night." I dislike Dante and Byron. I should like to have known Jeremiah the Prophet, Horace, Walter Scott, Old Man Poggio, Bonaparte, Hawthorne, Madame Sontag, Sir John Herschel, Hans Andersen.

I dislike "politics" so called. I should like to have the privilege of voting extended to women. I am opposed to capital punishment. I favor a system of pensions for noble services in literature, art, science, and so forth. I approve of compulsory education. I believe in churches and schools. I hate wars, armies, guns, and fireworks.

If I could have *my* way, I should make the abuse of horses, dogs, and cattle a penal offence; I should abolish all dog-laws and dog-catchers, and I would punish severely everybody who caught and caged birds.

I do not care particularly for sculpture or for paintings; I try not to become interested in them, for the reason that if I were to cultivate a taste for them I should presently become hopelessly bankrupt.

I love to read in bed. I am extravagantly fond of perfumes. My favorite color is red. I am a poor diner, and I drink no wine or spirits of any kind. I do not smoke tobacco, I dislike crowds, and I abominate functions.

I am six feet in height; am spare of build, weigh 160 pounds, and have shocking taste in

dress. But I like to have well-dressed people about me.

Apropos of this confession on the part of the poet, Mrs. Reginald De Koven sends us the following little anecdote. "One day Mr. Field got into a suburban train. He was rather more carelessly dressed than usual, with a flannel shirt, no necktie, and so on. He spied some friends, and, walking past them, as he went, did not salute them in any way, but remarked, looking straight ahead as he walked by, 'But I am a kind husband and an indulgent father nevertheless.'"

Mrs. Lydia Avery Coonley Ward adds another story of his disregard of appearances. "Mr. Field was very fond of practical jokes. On a bitter cold winter day he went downtown, walking part of the way and riding in the street-car part of the way, wearing a linen duster and a straw hat, and carrying a palm-leaf fan, which he used vigorously. All this with an absolutely solemn countenance."

Mr. Field's confession continues :

My eyes are blue, my complexion is pale, my face is shaven, and I incline to baldness. It is only when I look to see how young and fair and sweet my wife is that I have a good opinion of myself.

I am fond of the companionship of women, and I have no unconquerable prejudice against feminine beauty. I recall with pride that in twenty-two years of active journalism, I have always written in reverential praise of womankind.

I believe that, if I live, I shall do my best literary work when I am a grandfather.

"Mr. Field," says the poet's wife, "was fond of birds and they seemed to know and love him. Even the sparrows would cease their chattering when he tried to hush them, and would go ahead again when he encouraged them to do so.

"He was kind-hearted to a fault. When he was fourteen he accidentally stepped on a little chicken one day and killed it. He carried it home tenderly and hours afterward his aunt found him still holding the chicken and sobbing as if his heart would break."

Eugene Field did not live to satisfy the traditions. He dared to be himself. His disregard for appearances in dress was equalled by his disregard of established prejudices touching "correct literary form" as is shown in his poem "Guess," defending homely backwoods words and phrases. He recognized dialect as the only true method of conveying correct local coloring in certain phases of life. A good story is

told by an eminent Southern dialect writer who met him once at a supper given in her honor. They sat opposite a scholarly man of letters, an editor, a friend of Field's, who disapproved emphatically of dialect writing.

"There sits Mr. ——" whispered Field. "He hates us because we write dialect. But we don't care. God is on our side." Field's eyes twinkled with fun and he picked up the menu card and, to tease his editor friend, pretended to read from it an editorial presumably written by that gentleman and expressing his mind. He read: "There are those who think that dialect writing is valuable, but I unhesitatingly pronounce it all trash.

Signed :

THE-MAN-ACROSS-THE-TABLE."

(Giving his full name.)

Were Mr. Field living, he would enjoy the following amusing mistake. A little boy in a New York school was reciting "Pit-typat and Tippytoes. When he came to the line, "There are little *duds* to mend," he recited it, "There are little *dudes* to mend." The child, being a New York lad, used a distinctively New York word, probably never having heard the other, which is distinctively western.

A notable feature in Mr. Field was his love of toys, especially dolls. Mrs. Yeno-

wine says : " One day I went with him into a toy-store to get some things for the babies, as he rarely went home empty handed. After he had purchased several things, he ordered a dozen medium-sized bisque dolls. I wondered what he was going to do with so many, and put the question to him. He answered, " Oh, I like to have them, and when little girls come to see me I can give them a dolly to take home."

He gave a worsted dog and a fat little rubber doll to Dorothea Cable, aged four. One she named Mr. Field and one Eugene. She used to carry Mr. Field under one arm and Eugene under the other as if they represented two identities of one person.

Not only did Mr. Field give away dolls but he gladly received them and made a large collection of them. Mrs. Field still preserves them in his library and has sent us the photograph of them which is given on page 12.

Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart sends us the following letter written by Mr. Field to her six-year-old niece in acknowledgment of a doll which the little girl had given him.

charming little lady, and I am sure that she will enjoy life in the large family of dolls I am gathering together. I should like to meet you and talk with you about the many sacrifices such folk as you and I are have to make in order to clothe and educate our beloved dollies as we feel they should be clothed and educated. Yet we find ample compensation for all in the charm of their companionship. I hope, my dear little friend, that I shall never outgrow my love and reverence for that sacred instinct which the fondness for these little pets reveals. And I shall always be yours very affectionately

EUGENE FIELD.

NEW ORLEANS, *March 11, 1894.*



NOTES.

"Christmas Treasures." The first poem ever published by Eugene Field. Page 27.

"Intry-Mintry." An old "counting-out" game of Northern Massachusetts, interesting to lovers of folk-lore as being related to similar games of very ancient date. Page 36.

"Good-Children Street." There is a street of that name in New Orleans. Though given in derision, it has been treated seriously by the poet. Page 38.

"A Chapter of Profitable Letters." This chapter is furnished by Mrs. Field and the letters are from a collection soon to be issued in book form. Page 47.

"Seein' Things at Night." Mr. George H. Yenowine of Louisville writes: "Mr. Field heard my twelve-year-old son talking in his sleep. The next day he had a long talk with my boy on his little fears and superstitions, and immediately wrote "Seein' Things" and dedicated it to my son, Henry P. Yenowine. Page 75.

"Jest 'Fore Christmas." No one of good judgment can mistake the author's intent in this poem to give a good-natured thrust at a practice which is becoming an acknowledged custom. Page 102.

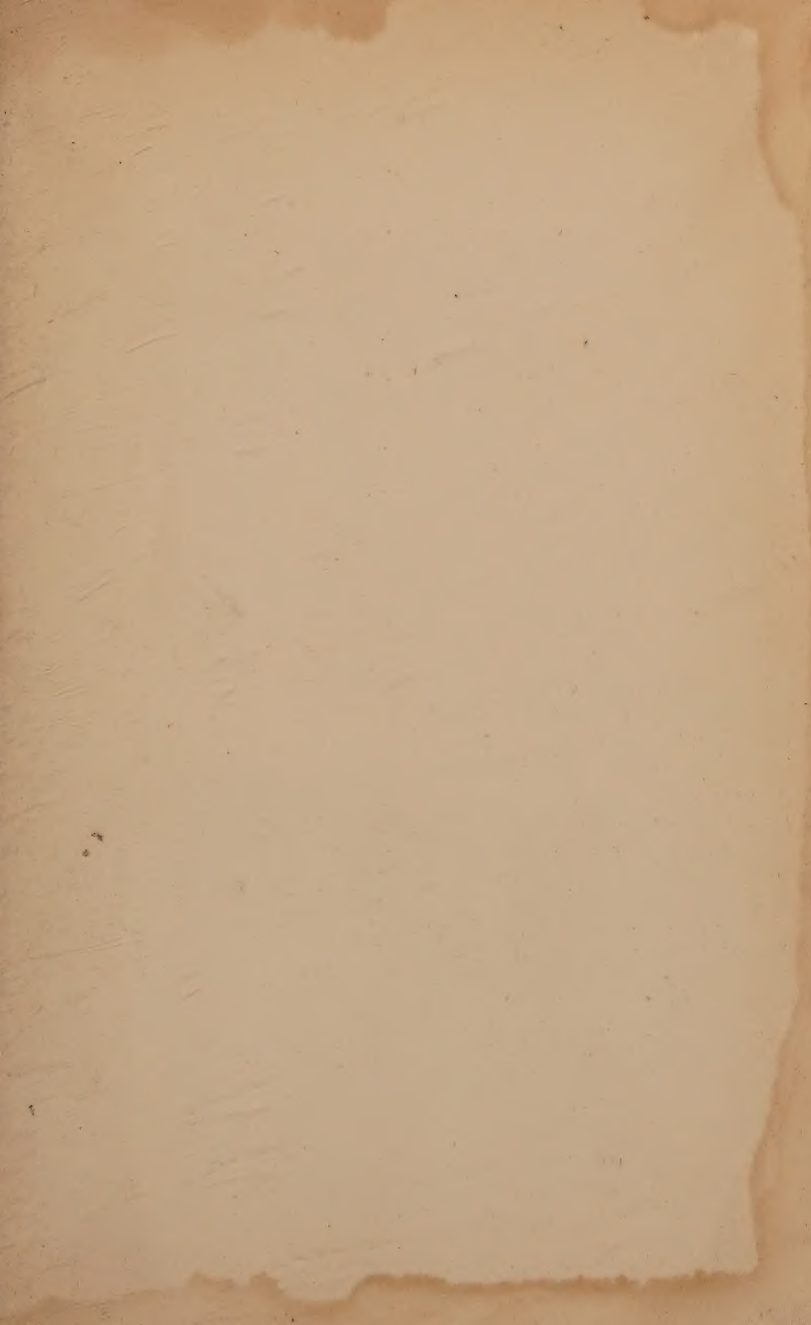
"Some Time." This poem was written under the following circumstances: When Mr. and Mrs. Field went abroad they took all the children with them, purposing to put them at school; but

they found it more and more difficult to part with them and kept deferring the separation. At last it was decided that on the following morning they should go, and Mr. and Mrs. Field were to leave the city for a short trip lest their hearts weaken if they stayed too near.

The little cots were all clustered about the bed, and after the children were all tucked in and had fallen asleep, Mr. Field wrote this Poem. Page 122.

"A Eugene Field Day in the Schoolroom." The custom of celebrating the birthday of a favorite poet is growing in our schools. In one State all of the schools are dismissed for the celebration of a "Eugene Field Day." The Quincy School of Poughkeepsie, New York, takes a very practical method of celebrating. The children had become very much interested in Field's poems and the instructor in one room suggested to her pupils that they should have a "Eugene Field Day," each child contributing whatever his own interest or genius might suggest, —a poem, letter, or some anecdote of Field's life. Each child wore a carnation pink, (the poet's favorite flower), and there was a bunch of carnations placed on the teacher's desk. The children read, recited, told stories, and enjoyed themselves thoroughly; and although they had used only the regular time devoted to a "language lesson," they had had a thoroughly enjoyable "Eugene Field Day," and the influence of this enthusiasm had become contagious throughout the whole school.









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